

TALLIS'S
SHAKSPERE GALLERY
OF
ENGRAVINGS.

PROEM.

Here we alive shall view thee still ; this book
When brass and marble fade, shall make thee look
Fresh to all ages ; when posterity
Shall loath what's new, think all is prodigy
That is not Shakspeare's.

DIGGES.

SHAKSPERE has not inappropriately been called "the genius of the British isles," for he, more than any single mind, has influenced our national character, imparting to it elegance by his poetry, humanity by his wide and comprehensive philanthropy, and wisdom by his just and lofty principles. A universal appreciation of his works would be a national good, before which ignorance and rudeness would fly, as the mists of falsehood perish beneath the bright rays of truth. Our poets have received inspiration at his shrine, and our people refinement; he has been the universal teacher, educating and elevating all who strive to understand him; the apostle of poetry, preaching universal benevolence, and the interpreter of nature, laying bare her secrets to the startled gaze of admiring millions. He is one of the broad ties which unite us to far distant countries; the sun never sets at once upon those who speak his tongue and reverence his genius, and the American citizen and Australian herdsman instance as the bonds of unity between them and us, one religion—one language—one Shakspeare. Nor is his fame confined to lands where the English tongue is heard—in Germany our great bard is admired and revered with an ardour bordering upon idolatry; while we have lately heard that in an Austrian dungeon the long-suffering and noble patriot Kossuth, the modern apostle of the holy cause of Freedom and national brotherhood, "was taught English by the words of the teacher Shakspeare."

Surely all that tends to a more perfect appreciation of his great dramas, should be heartily welcomed by a reflective people; illustration, whether by the pen of the critic, or the pencil of the artist, does acceptable work in the world; for it has been truly said, by an acute and laborious writer, that "he who at this day can entirely comprehend the writings of Shakspeare without the aid of a comment, and frequently of laborious illustration, may be said to possess a degree of inspiration almost commensurate with that of the great bard himself."

To add to a great people's knowledge of their poet-prophet; to create a spirit of appreciation in the young, and of critical, though kindly and generous, inquiry in the mature, is our object in the present volume. We trust that it will prove a key to the rich treasures of Shakspeare, enabling the inquiring mind to revel freely among the stores of intellect and beauty contained in the dramas of that universal poet, whom Coleridge happily called "the morning star, the guide and the pioneer of true philosophy."

Our essays upon the plays of Shakspeare are historical, so far as to include all facts of absolute interest connected with them; but what we deem of far greater value to the real lover of the poet, is that they are suggestive of a source of almost endless, and most delightful inquiry, an analytical investigation of the grand and varied creations of that comprehensive and finely balanced mind. Nature herself scarcely seems to produce men and women more remote from each other, both in intellect and passions, than has Shakspeare; the murderer Manning and his wife were not separated by a wider bourn

from the sublime and comprehensive philosopher Newton, whose thoughts wandered amidst the stars; or the rapt Milton, whose imagination peopled the universe, and even realised the awful form of Divinity itself; than is Desdemona from Iago, Hamlet from Falstaff, Dogberry from Lear, Cleopatra from Isabella, or Imogen from Cressida. From one gigantic and Protean mind sprang all these diverse conceptions, each a metaphysical study; each so in harmony with nature, and so perfectly consistent with itself, that the philosophical inquirer may trace its words to the motives from whence they sprang, with the same degree of certainty as the man of science can trace effects to causes in the material world. And yet so subtle are the mysteries of the soul, so delicate the various shades of thought and feeling, that although men of strongly discriminative powers have given a life-study to the perfect illustration of this one great mind, yet still we stand but upon the vestibule of the temple of Shakspeare's genius, and gaze from a distance upon those wonderful mysteries of thought and beauty.

In *Timon of Athens*, Shakspeare introduces a poet and a painter, who contend in amicable rivalry about the respective capability of the arts they severally follow in telling a story, and the painter, to shew the superiority of the pencil over the pen, exclaims:—

A thousand moral paintings I can shew,
That shall demonstrate the quick blows of Fortune
More pregnantly than words.

Without entering into the merits of this controversy, we may, not unfairly, seize the bard's happy expression, and say that the skill of our artists, painting with pencils made by no human fingers, but rendering permanent the imaginations of genius, by the unerring beams of the creative sun, do indeed not unfrequently illustrate the conceptions of Shakspeare, *more pregnantly than words*. The skill of the artist forms a commentary upon the language of the poet which the simplest can understand, and which will quicken the imagination of the wisest.

It is but an act of justice to the great dramatic artists of our day, to preserve some durable record of the efforts of their genius; the triumphs of the actor have too often hitherto been written in sand, and when age or death has quietly withdrawn them from the scene, nothing remains to tell their story to posterity. We know that Shakspeare was himself an actor, but there our knowledge of him in that direction halts; we also know that Burbage, Lowin, and Alleyn were his associates, and the original representatives of his grandest creations—of his Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and Richard—but we possess scarcely more than their names—all else has perished, and the antiquarian sighs in vain for some further record, some illustration by pencil or by pen of that brilliant period, when the father of our modern stage, mingled with his gifted associates and gave them valuable suggestions in the theatre, and playful jests and sparkling quibbles in the tavern. Imagination may revel in the scene, and make an enchanting mental picture of it, but it is but a day-dream which will vanish like a fairy vision at the first interruption of the actual and commonplace world around us. The age of Daguerreotypeism and illustrated-journalism was a thing of the future, and it was left to the present day, for the writer and the engraver to labour in unison, with pen and point, and send forth the children of their industry to swell the materials for a history of their age.

That the dramatic genius of the present era may not glide unnoticed into comparative oblivion, we propose in this volume to associate the portraits of the most distinguished living actors, with our reflections upon the characters it has been their delight to assume, and to a realisation of which they have, in many instances, devoted years of close and patient study.

To the refined and educated this work will speak for itself, it needs not to be ushered in with a flourish of trumpets, like the kings in our old plays; it speaks at once both to the eye and to the ear, and the student of Shakspeare will warmly welcome it as an addition to his library, the like of which, in times past, princes could not have purchased with their sceptres.

We wish to say, in conclusion, that we shall attempt no arrangement of our portraits according to the talent of the actors represented; our object is to embrace as wide a circle, and publish as great a variety of portraits as possible, both in tragedy and comedy. We shall endeavour to make our SHAKSPEARE GALLERY a dramatic pageant, consisting of scenes and characters from the creations of his exhaustless muse, realizing to the student in the solitude of his chamber the delineations of the great master-mind with the vivid reality of actual representation, and forming at once a monumental tribute to his genius, and a pictorial history of the drama in the present day.

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.

THE germ from which sprang this wonderful tragedy, which has occupied the attention of commentators, critics, and metaphysicians, to a much larger extent than any other work of its great author, may be found in Saxo Grammaticus, the Danish historian. From thence it was adopted by Belleforest, and appeared in his collection of novels in seven volumes, entitled *Histoires Tragique*, and this being translated into English, in 1608, with the title of *The Hystorie of Hamblet*, furnished Shakspeare with the subject of this reflective yet highly popular drama.

Those, however, who have the curiosity to turn to the story will find merely a plain narrative, which has no resemblance in language, and which differs very materially in action from the Hamlet of Shakspeare. In it the prince feigns to be an idiot, to save himself from incurring the anger or suspicion of Fengon the usurper, who suspects that he has some intention of revenging the murder of his father (which is effected by open violence, and not by subtlety), and who therefore employs several stratagems to discover whether he is really the harmless fool he appears to be. He first sets a beautiful girl to seduce the prince, and in moments of abandonment to win his confidence, and learn if he has any secret designs to revenge his father, and to recover his kingdom. He then places a courtier behind the arras of the queen's chamber, to report the conversation of the mother and her son; but Hamlet discovering him, kills and cuts him in pieces, and gives them to the hogs. This nameless parasite, who has not a word to utter, is all the hint that our poet received for his excellent character of Polonius. The prince finally destroys the whole court by nailing down the tapestry of the banquetting hall over them when they lay on the ground in a drunken sleep after a bacchanalian revel, and then setting fire to the palace at each corner; so that they all perish in the flames. While the king, who had retired, he seeks in his own chamber, and slays by cutting off his head. Hamlet then governs in his stead, marries two wives, and is at last betrayed by one of them into the hands of a rebellious chief, who is beloved by his queen, and by him put to death. Thus his own fate is not dissimilar to that of his father's.

I have thus briefly mentioned the chief incidents of this story, to show that although it undoubtedly suggested to Shakspeare the idea of his tragedy, he was still not greatly indebted to it.

A critical analysis of this drama would be impossible within our necessary limitation; but notwithstanding that there already exist so many acute and eloquent essays upon it, I shall briefly notice its most prominent characters and beauties.

The chief thing which strikes us in the character of Hamlet is his irresolution; everything he does is "sicklied o'er" with doubt and uncertainty; he occupies himself with constant and unsatisfactory meditations upon the great mysteries of life and death; he is in all things sceptical, and in losing his faith in nature he loses much of his love of it also. Man delights him not, and the blue vault of heaven seems to him no other "than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours." Compare him with Shakspeare's character of Richard the Third, and you perceive the extent of his inertness; Richard is all action, Hamlet all thought. Of Richard it is said "actions but thought by him are half performed," but Hamlet does nothing until he is spurred and goaded on by outward circumstances. He is eaten up with a great woe which shuts out all sympathy with others, and wanders about on the stage of life like a man who has some task to do greater than he can perform. Destiny has proposed to him a riddle which he cannot solve; and because he cannot, like the Sphinx of old, it devours him. Hamlet is no hero, his irresolution is weakness bordering on moral cowardice. He resolves on suicide, and then

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reasons himself out of his decision; he dedicates his life to the revenge of his father's murder, then defers taking it until he has further evidence of his uncle's guilt; receives that evidence, and still doubts, deliberates, and does nothing; and his revenge is consummated at last almost by accident, when finding that he has but a few minutes to live, that his mother is poisoned, and his own life destroyed by the treachery of his father's murderer, then lashed by personal agony, and the horror of his situation, into a paroxysm of fury; and knowing that revenge, if delayed but for a moment, is lost for ever, he rushes upon the king with the frantic violence of desperation, and after stabbing him with the anointed weapon forces the contents of the poisoned goblet down his throat.

Mr. Stevens estimates the character of Hamlet very sternly, and considers him not only unamiable but criminal though he admits that the prince assassinated Polonius by accident, yet he states that he deliberately procures the execution of his two schoolfellows, who appear to have been ignorant of the treacherous nature of the mandate they were employed to carry; his conduct to Ophelia deprives her both of her reason and her life, and he then interrupts her funeral, and insults her brother by boasting of an affection for his sister which he had denied to her face, and that he kills the king at last to revenge himself, and not his father.

This summary of the character of Hamlet, though strongly stated, is not a false one; his conduct is certainly indefensible unless we regard him as a man whose mind was to some extent overthrown by the peculiarity of the circumstances in which he was placed. This brings us to the oft disputed question, whether the madness of Hamlet was real or feigned—an attentive perusal of the tragedy will, I think, lead us to the conclusion that it was both one and the other. His mind at times trembled on the brink of madness, shaken but not overthrown. Not utterly perverted by mental disease, but very far from the exercise of its healthy functions, at times enjoying the perfect use of reason, and at others clouded and confused. Hamlet exaggerates his mental defects, and feeling his mind disordered, plays the downright madman.

He, however, nowhere admits his insanity; and his soliloquies certainly bear no appearance of wildness. So far from believing himself mad, he has great faith in his own intellectual resources: he feels that he is surrounded by spies—by men whom he will trust as he will “adders fanged;” but, he adds—

It shall go hard,
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon.

This implies great confidence in his own acuteness; and, to his mother, he most emphatically denies that he labours under mental disorder: he is, he says, “not in madness, but mad in craft.” But we should not take the word of a madman for evidence respecting his own malady. Hamlet is rather cunning than wise—a quality not unfrequently found in men suffering from a partial mental alienation. It should be recollected, also, that he has no reason for assuming insanity to his friend Horatio, whom he had trusted with his secret, and informed that he might think fit “to put an antic disposition on.” Still, when discoursing very gravely with him in the churchyard, he suddenly breaks off from his subject, and asks, abruptly—“Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?” A mind so flighty cannot be justly called sound.

Dr. Johnson says—“of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.” This is true enough, Hamlet's assumed madness in no way assists in working out his revenge, but, on the contrary, nearly prevents its execution, for had the king succeeded in his design in sending him to England, the pretended lunacy would have brought him to his death; or it might very likely have led to his close confinement in Denmark. This absence, then, of a sufficient cause for feigning madness implies that some seeds of absolute insanity were the origin of it.

Hamlet's conduct to Polonius is very unjustifiable, only to be accounted for by supposing that

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his mind is somewhat disturbed, though he may also dislike the old courtier because he is the counsellor and companion of the King; but there is no treachery in the talkative old man. Polonius is very just and open; when he discovers Hamlet's love for his daughter, he lays no plot to induce him to marry her, he will not play "the desk or table-book," but discountenances the attachment, and informs the King and Queen of it. Foolishly talkative, he is still a very shrewd man, and though his wisdom is fast falling into the weakness and childishness of age, he has been a very acute observer. Dr. Johnson, who has given an admirable delineation of this character, says:—"Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it has become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight. While he depends upon his memory, and can draw from his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences and gives useful counsel; but as the mind, in its enfeebled state, cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to sudden dereliction of his faculties, he loses the order of his ideas, and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle and falls again into his former train. This idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom, will solve all the phenomena of the character of Polonius."

Ophelia is a gentle affectionate character, drawn in and sucked down by the whirlpool of tragic events which surround her. Hamlet treats her very harshly, but, although this probably proceeds partly from his aberration of intellect, he is also influenced by a suspicion that she is acting treacherously towards him, and is an instrument in the hands of the King and her father for some unworthy purpose.

It has puzzled many of the critics to account for the circumstance, that although Ophelia is so modest in her sanity that she never even confesses her love for Hamlet, we only gather from her actions that she loves him; that when she becomes insane she sings snatches of obscene songs. Some have thought Shakspeare erred in this, but in the expression of human passions he never errs. It has been well suggested, that in madness people frequently manifest a disposition the very opposite of that which they possessed while in a state of sanity—the timid become bold, the tender cruel—and that Ophelia, in like manner, forsook her modesty of demeanour, and became the reverse of her natural character. Mr. G. Dawson thinks Ophelia, in her sanity, to be warm in her passions—not a coarse sensualist, like the Queen; but what he calls *sensuous*—that way disposed, yet keeping a strict guard upon herself; and that when she becomes mad that restraint is removed, and her character appears in its natural colours.

Much controversy also has been expended upon the question whether the Queen was an accessary to the murder of her husband; her surprise on Hamlet's exclamation in her chamber, "As kill a king," has been quoted to exonerate her. This supposition is strengthened by the fact, that she exhibits no uneasiness or remorse at the play, as the King does, and that no remark ever takes place between her and her husband in relation to it. Her agony of mind when her son compares her two husbands, and so severely censures her, arises from the recollection of her adulterous intercourse with Claudius during the life of the late king, and her hasty and incestuous marriage.

This tragedy is highly interesting, because we have in it so great a revelation of the Poet himself in certain phases of his rich and varied mind; in it he seems also to have made some attempt at dramatic reformation—at one time he instructs the actors, then his remarks have a direction to the audience, and he gives them a lesson upon what they should admire, and what condemn, and in what light they should regard the actors—not as triflers or disreputable men, but as a means of popular education and refinement.

According to the chronology of Mr. Malone, Shakspeare produced this tragedy in 1596; it was registered in the books of the Stationers' Company on the 26th of July, 1602. On the title-page of the earliest copy now extant, dated 1604, it is stated to be "newly imprinted, and enlarged to almost as much again as it was."

H. T.

Macbeth.

THIS dark and terrible drama may, perhaps, be ranked as the most grand and fearful of all Shakspeare's tragedies. *Lear* is usually considered as more exquisitely touching and sublime; but in *Macbeth* there is such a rapid march of events, such an extraordinary mingling of both the natural and supernatural, such an entirety of action, such varied scenery—now picturesque, now solemn—such romantic incidents, and such a strong halo of mystic beauty and poetry, as to mark it for one of the most extraordinary productions of the human mind.

The chief incidents of this tragedy our poet found in the history of *Macbeth*, in *Holinshed's Chronicle*, which he has followed without greatly deviating from, in the historical part; but he has given perfect freedom to his bold and powerful imagination in the manner in which he has transformed a few naked facts into the most terrible tragedy which ever engrossed the attention, or appalled the mind of the reader or spectator. A hint was seldom lost upon Shakspeare; one single expression in some old romance or chronicle, is often the seed which he matures into some elaborately conceived and grandly executed character; this is singularly the case with that of Lady Macbeth, of whom there is the following mention only in *Holinshed*:—"But speciallie his wife lay sore upon him to attempt the thing, as she that was verie ambitious, burning with unquenchable desire to be a queen." And upon these few words does he build that wonderful and fearful character, of whom it is difficult to believe that she is but a creation of the poet's brain. The chronicle, after recording the death of the tyrant, concludes thus:—"This was the end of Macbeth, after he had reigned seventeen yéeres over the Scottishmen. In the beginning of his reigne he accomplished manie worlthie acts, verie profitable to the commonwealth; but afterward, by the illusion of the divell, he defamed the same with the most terrible crueltie. He was slaine in the yéere of the incarnation, 1057, and in the sixteenth yéere of King Edward's reigne over the Englishmen."*

Shakspeare's tragedy upon this subject was produced in 1606, a period of singular superstition; King James originally published his book on *Dæmonologie* at Edinburgh, in 1597, but after his succession to the throne of Elizabeth, it was reprinted at London, in 1603, with a preface in which he reminds the reader of "the fearefull abounding at this time in this countrey, of these detestable slaves of the Divel, the Witches or Enchanters." This piece of mischievous absurdity was followed in the same year by a new statute against witches, having a clause to this effect, that:—"Any one that shall use, practise, or exercise any invocation or conjuration of any evill or wicked spirit, or consult, covenant with, entertaine or employ, feede or reward, an evill or wicked spirit, to or for any intent or purpose; or take up any dead man, woman, or child, out of his, her, or their grave, or any other place where the dead body resteth, or the skin, bone, or other part of any dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charme, or enchantment; or shall use, practise, or exercise any witchcraft, enchantment, charme, or sorcery, whereby any person shall be killed, destroyed, wasted, consumed, pined, or lamed, in his or her body, or any part thereof, such

* A very interesting account of the life and reign of Macbeth will be found in Wright's *History of Scotland*, now publishing by Messrs. Tallis and Co. The author thus dismisses the subject:—"Such is the veritable history of a chieftain who, from the circumstance of his having been made the hero of one of the best known tragedies of Shakspeare, has become one of the most celebrated of the earlier Scottish kings. It will be seen that most of the incidents of Shakspeare's play have no foundation in history, though some of them are taken from the fables of the later chronicles. Instead of being hated by his subjects, the name of Macbeth was long popular in Scotland as that of one of the best of their kings, and the Scottish people felt the indignity of a foreign intervention in their domestic affairs."

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offenders, duly and lawfully convicted and attainted, shall suffer death." Such was the state of the public mind at that time, that a belief in witchcraft was almost universal in this country, and the result of the publication of King James's book was visible in the destruction, in Scotland, of not less than six hundred beings at once, for the supposed commission of a crime which the better judgment of a later age has declared to be impossible. It cannot be doubted that the mind of Shakspeare was to some extent influenced by the prevailing superstition, and that to this we probably owe the existence of that masterpiece of dramatic genius, his tragedy of *Macbeth*.

Let us now turn our attention more immediately to the work itself, and give a brief analysis of its principal characters; it may be called a sublime homily on the weakness of human nature—a startling warning, spoken, as it were, in words of thunder, and written in characters of blood, against dallying with temptation. Macbeth is gradually led to do that which he persuades himself he cannot avoid—he consents to become a murderer, because he believes that fate has willed it so; he is not the first or the last great criminal who have cast their sins upon a supposed fatal and indisputable ordinance, and who believe, or profess to believe, that they were predestined to evil. He is brave and just before he is tempted, but when tempted strongly, he yields, and falls from the warrior to the tyrant—timorous, cunning, and bloodthirsty. When he slays the unoffending Duncan he first reasons strongly against the act, tries to escape from its commission—his conscience wrestles with him, and represents the virtues of the meek king pleading like angels "against the deep damnation" of the deed; and when the act is done, it is instantly repented, and the murderer stands aghast at his soul-destroying work. The poet has here presented us with an awful picture of the terrors of conscience—the shuddering murderer trembling at every sound, and peopling the air with avenging voices uttering strange and fearful threatenings; but after Macbeth becomes deeply steeped in blood and familiar with crime, we may observe the savage premeditation of his murders. When giving directions for the death of Banquo, he addresses the assassins thus:—"Was it not yesterday we spoke together?" evincing a perfect indifference to the intended destruction of his old associate and fellow soldier; he has altogether got rid of the "compunctious visitings" which shook him when engaged in the murder of Duncan. It has been said that a man who commits one murder, and escapes detection or punishment, seldom remains single in his crime—he is hounded on by his impetuous and savage desires again to imbrue his hands in blood; thus is it with Macbeth, he feels that for him there is no retreat, and he adds crime to crime, until he becomes a mere vulgar tyrant, surrounding his nobility with spies, and, in his fear, devoting to death even the innocent, whom he merely suspected to be dangerous.

Lady Macbeth is such a character as Shakspeare alone, of all our dramatists, could have painted—terrible even to sublimity in her determinate wickedness—fiend-like in the savage obduracy of her nature; the bitter scoffer of the irresolute pleadings of departing virtue, and the expiring throes of conscience in her guilty partner: still she is never utterly beyond our sympathy. She urges her husband to the murder of Duncan, but she bears no hatred to the mild old king: he is an obstacle in her path to greatness, and must be removed. When bending over his couch, on the fearful night of his murder, when, amidst the howlings of the storm and the rack of the elements, there were

Lamentings heard i' the air; strange screams of death
And prophecying, with accents terrible—

even then, unmoved by all these horrors, she contemplates his destruction by her own hand; but the resemblance between him and her aged father shoots athwart her mind, and she experiences a momentary tenderness for the unsuspecting and defenceless monarch. She is a woman still. But this softening of her stern nature is but transient; it does not last long enough to interfere with her dread resolve; she feels, but smothers human sympathies, and brings them into bondage to her adamant will. This fearful woman is a faithful and affectionate wife: we view her with none of the abhorrence which is excited in us towards Regan and Goneril, the cruel and unnatural daughters of the aged Lear whom,

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with an exquisite probability, Shakspeare also makes unchaste and treacherous wives. When, at the banquet, Macbeth raves about the ghost of Banquo, who glares horribly upon him, and points to the

— Twenty trenchéd gashes on his head,

she dismisses the guests in confusion; but when they are gone, she utters not one word of reproach, but gently tells him that he lacks rest.

She has shown no sign of repentance—spoken no word of compunction; yet we see her punishment is begun; the torture of the mind tells on the fevered frame; the seed which she had sown in blood, though it had grown to be a vigorous plant, had borne no fruit; and when she next comes upon the scene, it is when broken-hearted and dying she utters in her sleep those fearful thoughts which, in her watchful moments, she had kept closed up in the whited sepulchre of her own sad, yet hardened heart.

For his supernatural machinery, Shakspeare has taken some broad hints from Middleton's play of *The Witch*, which, with a few bold thoughts, possesses a great deal that is both gross and frivolous: his witches are disgusting and unbridled female libertines. Shakspeare has elevated them into wild and malignant essences, who, though possessing no sympathy with human suffering, appear to possess the worst of human passions. The weird sisters of Middleton are of earth; those of Shakspeare, of hell—mean instruments of demoniacal power and temptation, and bearing a similar relation to humanity as the plague-winds and the pestilent swamp, from which is ever rising the malaria of death, do to the prolific beauty of an otherwise enchanting and productive land. They meet in thunder and in lightning, to the accompaniment of wild and supernatural music; they answer strange voices in the air—familiar, in the form of cats and toads; they love the midnight, and inhabit the passing storm; they crouch beneath the gibbet of the murderer, and meet in dark caves, amidst convulsions and rockings of the earth; and there they brew their hell-broth, and devise evil suggestions and illusions to ensnare the weak. They have nothing in common with this world, but are altogether hellish, in the coarse, material sense of the word. Shakspeare does not create a spirit by merely making it exempt from the customary conditions of humanity—visible or invisible at its own will—dying away on the air, like music in the night, and setting the law of gravitation at defiance. No; his spirits have all a diverse, ethereal character. Titania, Oberon, and Puck, Ariel and Caliban, and the Ghost in *Hamlet*, have characteristics altogether distinct, not from his witches only, but from each other. And how finely does he distinguish between palpable, absolute apparitions, and mere spectral delusions. The Ghost in *Hamlet* is a reality—a spiritual existence, which is seen by Horatio and the officers on guard, and which communicates with Hamlet; but the Ghost of Banquo is seen by no one but Macbeth: it merely comes, gazes upon him, and vanishes—that is, there is no ghost, but a mere delusion, bred from feverish and unnatural excitement.

After Macbeth and his ambitious wife, there are few strongly marked characters in the play. Duncan is a mild and virtuous sovereign; but he calls for little further comment: the softness of his nature is traceable in the timid characters of his two sons, who, by their disgraceful flight, at first incur the suspicion of being his murderers. Banquo is the opposite of Macbeth, being both a brave and virtuous general. The witches solicit him, also, during sleep, to some horrible act, but he prays against a repetition of the temptation, while Macbeth is on the watch for opportunity.

This great tragedy conveys a grand moral precept: poetical justice is dealt out rigidly to its chief actors. Lady Macbeth, as the greatest criminal, is the greatest sufferer: madness, and a supposed suicide, close her career of guilt and gloom; and her husband meets his death by the same violent means as those by which he had attained his regal but wretched eminence, while the punishment of both is brought about by their own evil actions.

Scenes of terror, such as are found in this tragedy, stand alone; otherwise, says Schlegel, "the tragic muse might exchange her mask for the head of *Medusa*."

H. T.



MR G.V. BROOKE AS OTHELLO,
AND
MR JAMES BENNETT AS IAGO.

OTH: If thou dost slander her and torture me
never pray more."

OTHELLO.

Act 3, Sc 3.

Engraved from a Daguerreotype, by R. Holt.

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Othello, the Moor of Venice.

SHAKSPERE took the hint for this tragedy from a story in the *Hecatomithi* of Giraldi Cinthio, the Italian novelist, of which, however, no translation of the time of our poet has been discovered. The story by Cinthio is very short, the characters consisting only of the Moor, Desdemona, the lieutenant, the ensign, and the wife of the latter; none of them being called by their names, except the unfortunate victim of treachery and jealousy. The incidents also are dissimilar in many respects, especially in regard to the death of Desdemona, who is murdered in a manner so revolting that the good taste of Shakspeare instantly discarded it. She is beaten to death by the ensign with a stocking filled with sand, the Moor countenancing this savage murder by his presence. Then placing her in bed they pull down the rafters of the room upon it, and the Moor calls for help, saying the house is falling. The neighbours on this alarm running there, find Desdemona dead under the beams, and her decease is attributed to accident, and not to design. "But," says the novelist, "God, who is a just observer of the hearts of men, suffered not so great a crime to pass without the punishment that was due to it." The Moor becomes deranged in his mind, and hating the ensign for the part he took against his wife degrades him from his commission, upon which the latter accuses him of the murder of Desdemona, and the general is subjected to the rack, and then condemned to exile, "in which," says the narrator, "he was afterwards killed, as he deserved to be, by his wife's relations." The ensign escaped for a time, but being arrested for some other crime, he also was put to the torture, and racked so severely that he died in consequence.

Such are the bare and rude materials (possessing no further interest or literary merit than a modern newspaper narrative of murder) upon which our poet has founded his great tragedy, which Mr. Douce contends is inferior "in point of originality and poetic wealth to *Macbeth*, to *Lear*, to *Hamlet*, and *The Tempest*." Its inferiority in point of *originality* I emphatically deny; Shakspeare's obligation to Cinthio is so very trifling as to be unworthy of record, if it were not interesting to know from what seed in the garden of fiction so great and noble a tree as *Othello* was generated. To carry out the comparison, it reminds me of the mustard seed in the parable, which is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it becometh a great tree, and the fowls of the air lodge in the branches. This tragedy may be inferior in mere poetry to all the plays just enumerated, but in the delineation of the sublime energy of passion, it is superior to them all except *Lear*, and our compassion for Othello is even greater than that which we entertain for the aged monarch.

The Moor is amiable, brave, generous, and firm; with him, what should be, must be: he will not permit his feelings to interfere with what he deems his duty. This feature of his character contributes materially to the catastrophe of the tragedy: had he possessed the irresolution of Hamlet, Iago's villany would have been discovered, and Desdemona saved; for Hamlet would always have been desiring more evidence, and even, when convinced of her falseness, would have remained undecided how to act, and probably would have ultimately divorced her. But Iago calculates on the hot Moorish blood which runs in Othello's veins; he knows the impetuous fierce passions which lie latent in the soul of the victim of his fiendish deception, and practises upon them accordingly. Othello is very philosophical until his mind is poisoned by the insinuations of Iago; he keeps a sort of military guard over his passions; remember his calm even conduct when Brabantio approaches him in the street at night, followed by armed servants and public officers, whom he bids to seize the Moor; he himself addressing him as "vile thief," and with other violent language. And before the Duke he conducts his own cause with the subtilty and readiness of an advocate. What a touch of effective oratorical artifice is that where he tells the assembled senate, that he had been bred in a camp, knew but little of the

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE.

world, and therefore could not grace his cause by the arts of eloquence. Thus leading them to the belief that he was incapable of defending himself, and then delivering the most effective oration that could have been uttered in his behalf. But when the maddening conviction of his wife's treachery and shame is forced upon him, he breaks out into a paroxysm of frantic passion; his habit of self-government is for a time annihilated, and the hot blood of the savage triumphs over the judgment of the man. He tries to escape from this dreadful conviction:—

By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it.

But Iago draws the web gradually closer and more closely around him, and, with fiendish sagacity, keeps the subject in all its most hideous colours perpetually in his mind, until the final perpetration of the terrible catastrophe of the drama. How painfully affecting is the anguish of soul with which he exclaims: "But yet the pity of it, Iago!—O, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!" Well might Coleridge, with the true feeling of a poet, ask, as the curtain drops, which do we pity most, Desdemona, or the heart-broken Moor.

Iago is an utter villain, with no redeeming circumstances—love, benevolence, sympathy for his race, every holy and exalted feeling have, in him, no existence; their place is occupied by a satanic selfishness, and an absolute love of malice; it is the fertile activity of his intellect, and the ingenuity of his wickedness, that alone make him endurable, otherwise we should shrink from him with loathing and disgust. He is the most villanous character ever drawn by Shakspeare, for Richard III. is cruel, to serve his ambition; but Iago is cruel and fraudulent, because he finds a pleasure in fraud and cruelty; he has no belief in honesty—does not think there is any such thing in the world; he entertains an obdurate incredulity as to the virtue of women, and has a perfect faith that Desdemona will be seduced by Cassio, if he tempts her. He looks upon everything only in a gross and sensual light, and delights in painting the purest feelings in the most repulsive colours; this will explain why Shakspeare has put so many coarse and revolting speeches in his mouth. No character the great poet ever drew utters so many offensive expressions, and this was, doubtless, intended to exhibit the intense depravity of his mind. He has a natural turn for dishonesty and trickery, and would rather gain his ends by deception than by straightforward conduct. He is proud of his cunning, and witty also, full of that ill-natured sarcasm which delights in giving pain to others.

The character of Cassio is admirably delineated—he is every way calculated to become an object of suspicion to the Moor—he is young, handsome, and courteous, a scholar, and something of a poet, as his beautiful description of Desdemona will evidence. Even Iago admits, "That he hath all those requisites in him that folly and green minds look after."

Poor Desdemona is the perfection of womanly gentleness and tenderness—a generous, romantic girl, full of kindness to every one, and by the very liberality of her nature, laying herself open to the aroused suspicions of her husband. If she has a fault, it is that she is too passive. Observe the wide contrast between her character and that of Emilia, as finely portrayed in the third scene of the fourth act. Othello has desired his wife to retire and dismiss her attendant, and the two women are conversing before they separate for the night, Desdemona, in her simple purity, asks:—

Dost thou in conscience think,—tell me, Emilia,—
That there be women do abuse their husbands
In such gross kind.

Note the worldliness of the other's reply; she would not do "such a thing for a joint-ring," *but*, &c.; and Desdemona's sceptical rejoinder, "I do not think there is any such woman." The absolute purity of her mind will not permit her to believe in evil. How sweetly touching is her character, compared with that of Iago—a seraph and a demon.

This tragedy is attributed by Mr. Malone to the year 1611, but on very slender grounds, with which he professes himself to be dissatisfied; but there is no doubt that it was one of Shakspeare's latest productions.

H. T.



MR. COULDOCK AS IAGO.

IAGO. O, you are well tuned now!
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.

OTHELLO. Act 2, Sc 1.

Engraved by T. Sherratt, from a Daguerreotype by Mr. Clee & Germon, Philadelphia.

JOHN TALLIS & COMPANY, LONDON & NEW YORK.

King Lear.

PARENTAL affection is the most noble and least selfish feeling of our nature, and the wanton outrage of it by monstrous ingratitude would not unnaturally suggest itself to a poet as a fit subject for a great drama; and Shakspeare, in working out this idea, has produced the most harrowing and painful tragedy extant.

Lear is an incorporation of two distinct stories, that of Gloster and his sons (which is an episode not strictly connected with the dotage and death of the aged monarch) is borrowed from *The pitifull State and Storie of the Paphlagonian unkinde King, and his kind Son*, in the second book of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*,* a work which there is sufficient evidence to prove that Shakspeare had read, if even he could have been supposed ignorant of a production of so much celebrity. That of the aged monarch himself, and his unnatural children, was built upon a relation of the circumstance in *Holinshed's Chronicle*, who, in his turn, copied Geoffrey of Monmouth, who says that Lear was the eldest son of Bladud, that he governed his country for sixty years, and died about eight hundred years before the birth of Christ. Shakspeare, though he doubtless read the *Chronicle* history, probably derived the incidents more immediately from a previous play on the same subject, entitled, *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his Three Daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella*, which play, although it was republished the same year when Shakspeare produced his *Lear*, appears to have been laid aside in favour of our own poet's later and infinitely superior production. There is also an historical ballad printed without date, and contained in *Percy's Reliques of Antient English Poetry*, which Dr. Johnson considered might have supplied Shakspeare with that part of his fable relating to the king and the ingratitude of his children, but it possesses no particular merit, and it is even doubted whether it was not subsequent to the play, and founded upon it, rather than that it furnished incidents to the poet. The story, however, seems to have been a traditional and popular one, and therefore open both to the ballad-maker and the dramatist.

Shakspeare's play was produced in 1605, or, according to Mr. Douce, in 1604, when the poet was in the very midsummer of existence, and the full maturity of his strength; when his powers of observation had been confirmed by experience; and the spirit of poetry, having gone beyond the beautiful, had ascended to the sublime; for of this tragedy it may be justly said, that the genius of antiquity bows before it, and moderns gaze upon it with awe. It contains so many strongly-drawn characters, so much worldly wisdom, and so many passages of an exquisite and sublime poetry, that it would seem as if the bard had, in the production of it, attempted to dazzle and confuse the minds of men with floods of mental beauty. The listening mind pants breathless after the fiery muse of the poet, and conception stands trembling and aghast. Yet it is not without its errors; Mr. Coleridge has thought it necessary to apologize for the improbability of the first scene, which he excuses merely because he says "it was an old story rooted in the popular faith." Beautiful as the character of Cordelia afterwards appears, she does not attract us at the first; her answer to her father is cold and unpleasing; her reiterated *nothing* smacks of the obstinacy of her parent's nature, but she is, perhaps, influenced by a disgust at the hypocritical pretensions and fulsome adulations of her sisters.

Most critics have lauded the poet for his construction of this tragedy, and the subtilty he has evinced in weaving the two plots together; indeed, assimilating them to each other; but—heresy as it may be—I could have spared the episode of Gloucester and Edmund; it draws our attention too much

* Sir Philip Sidney was killed in 1586, the *Arcadia* was a posthumous work which first appeared in 4to, in 1590, under the direction of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke.

KING LEAR.

from the passionate sublimity of Lear, on whom the mind is so concentrated, that we are apt to become indifferent when he is not present or referred to. The incident of tearing out the eyes of the aged Duke, and thrusting him forth with the yet bleeding sockets, to wander in darkness and misery, is the only unmitigatedly repulsive scene in all Shakspeare's works, (omitting *Titus Andronicus*, the authenticity of which is considered doubtful,) an action the relating of which in its revolting detail is productive rather of sickness and disgust than of tragic interest. Such is the horror of this savage cruelty that it wrings from the wretched sufferer a doubt of the justice and mercy of the universal providence, and he utters that dark and fearful expression :—

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods ;
They kill us for their sport.

The character of Lear is grand in the extreme ; the choleric yet affectionate old king, jealous of his dignity, brooking no insult, rash and impetuous, blind to every thing but momentary feeling, and heedless of all results—casts from his bosom his only affectionate child, and bestows his kingdom upon his two treacherous daughters, whose fiendish ingratitude rob him of the little which he had reserved to himself, and drive him forth to meet the midnight storm, and expose his white head to the “ oak-cleaving thunderbolts ;” he wanders about in his pathless way until his mind is disturbed, and the impetuous, dishonoured king, and broken-hearted father, becomes by degrees mad, from dwelling too intently on the monstrous ingratitude of his children. He is at length rescued from the frightful destitution and misery to which he had been abandoned ; but it is too late ; the blow has been inflicted ; the shock was too great to permit of his recovery, and, as Schlegel eloquently observes, “ all that now remains to him of life is the capability of loving and suffering beyond measure.”

Some critics, amongst whom was Doctor Johnson, contended that the termination was too tragical for endurance, and that poetical justice was violated by the ultimate death of Lear and his daughter Cordelia ; the sublime tragedy of Shakspeare was therefore banished from the stage, and Tate's corrupt version, in which the scenes are most unnecessarily transposed, altered, and interspersed with silly bombast, and vapid puerility, was substituted in its stead ; Lear was saved, and Cordelia retired with victory and happiness. A modern critic in allusion to this, exclaims : “ a happy ending !—as if the living martyrdom that he had gone through, the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation ? why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy ? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station, as if at his years and with his experience, anything was left but to die.”

Tate also cut out of his adaptation of Shakspeare's tragedy the character of the Fool ; which was much the same as if some modern dauber should paint out the sunlight from a landscape of Claude's. We feel more than a common interest for this jester on account of his strong attachment to Lear and his family ; he is also a great favourite of the aged king, is a wise counsellor, and, though a bitter satirist, is faithful to the old man through all his persecutions, and is hanged at last for his adherence to the cause of his deposed master. He never forgets his character ; reverse of fortune makes him satirical, but never serious ; he talks with a purpose, and strives to arouse the old monarch to re-assert his rank and condition, and enforce the respect due to it. The fourth scene in the third act is extremely grand, the real madness of Lear, the assumed madness of Edgar, and the quaint pithy sayings of the Fool, make a strange and almost startling picture ; the very idea of bringing such characters together is a fine one, and would scarcely have occurred to any other author. The assumed insanity of Edgar is grandly contrasted with the real mental disorder of Lear. The latter never loses sight of the real causes of his misfortunes ; when Edgar first enters, personating the bedlamite, the aged king exclaims in tones of pity—

What, have his *daughters* brought him to this pass ?
Could'st thou save nothing ? Did'st thou give them all ?

KING LEAR.

And when the Fool asks him whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman? with a vivid sense of his own rashness, he answers "a king, a king!" But Edgar never alludes to the cause of his supposed madness, never forgets that he has a part to play, and the poet, with an exquisite observance of nature, makes him in his anxiety to preserve his disguise rather over-act the part; he is too learned; we see something of the gentleman through all the rags and mouthing of the assumed idiot. He is familiar with quaint traditions and odd tales of fiends and witches, which the real wandering idiot would never have thought of. Lear in the disorder of his mind is struck with the strange disparity in human fortunes and sufferings; he had been somewhat despotic in his sanity, but he turns reformer in his madness and babbles about the abuses of authority.

Kent is a very noble character, in every respect faultless; his love for his royal master endears him to us, while his rough energy and bluntness of speech claim our admiration. He is a plain truth-teller either to king or peasant, a quaint humourist, a lover of justice and liberty, who sacrifices his rank and his estate rather than flatter the rash monarch in his course of angry injustice. His excuse for his boldness of speech also is admirable, "To plainness honour's bound, when majesty stoops to folly."

Of the bastard Edmund, the poet Coleridge says finely, "it is a profound moral, that shame will naturally generate guilt, the oppressed will be vindictive." Shakspeare seems not unfrequently to rough-hew a character in one play which he matures and perfects in another; thus Birón reappears as Benedick, and Edmund as Iago. Shakspeare, who has made Edmund a man of acute intellect, has no doubt through him expressed his own opinion of the follies of astrological studies.

No where has Shakspeare drawn characters so alike as the two unnatural daughters of Lear; both selfish, ambitious, and overbearing, both guilty of the blackest ingratitude to their aged father, and even seeking his life; both, by a natural sequence, false to their husbands, both attached to the same paramour, and both dying by violence and in despair.

Shakspeare always vindicates the justice of God's providence; tyrants live hated and in fear, and die unpitied and in blood. The crafty perish by craft; the murderous and the treacherous live in a hell on earth; the wicked are heaven's instruments against themselves; and nature is eternally at war with sin. Thus with Regan and Goneril, they lead a life of conjunctive wickedness, carry on a partnership of devilry, and then growing jealous each of the other, Goneril poisons Regan, and then stabs herself.

Shakspeare's philosophy is a stern one, he is an impressive preacher of the doctrine of compensation—compensation to all, and for all deeds—evil for evil, good for good. Edgar, though a pagan, recognises this in these lines,

The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us,

And the dying villain Edmund admits its truth, and exclaims,

The wheel is come full circle; I am here.

We can never escape this, it is a law of our being which we cannot evade or shake off; if in any way we disturb another's peace we murder our own. It has been said, the dice of God are always loaded, there are no chance casts, and this doctrine our Shakspeare never loses sight of, it is indeed wonderfully prominent in Lear, and the aged monarch himself, much as we sympathise with him, is but suffering the punishment, a dreadful one it is true, for his unjust partiality to his elder daughters and his passionate and cruel desertion of his youngest child.

H. T.

Romeo and Juliet.

SCHLEGEL, in his consideration of this tragedy, rises in his enthusiasm from the critic to the poet, and eloquently exclaims:—"All that is most intoxicating in the odour of a southern spring, all that is languishing in the song of the nightingale, or voluptuous in the first opening of the rose, all alike breathe forth from this poem." But the touching story of the young and unfortunate lovers was not invented by Shakspeare; he has told it beautifully, indeed, but it had been long popular in England, and a play upon that subject held possession of our stage before the appearance of his tragedy.

There has been considerable discussion which it is needless to investigate (as it merely relates to the choice of but slender probabilities), concerning the date of this play; but I will accept the chronology of Mr. Malone, and refer it to the year 1595. It is one of our poet's earliest productions, and derives a more than ordinary degree of interest from the highly credible supposition that it was his first effort in tragedy.

The story is to be found in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, a work which Shakspeare had read; but he seems to be indebted for his materials rather to Arthur Brooke's poem of *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet*, written first in Italian by Bandell, and now in English by Ar. Br. In the preface to this poem, published in 1562, Brooke mentions a play which he had seen upon the subject, and, according to his judgment, one of no mean merit, from which also it is probable that Shakspeare derived some assistance: "I saw the same argument lately set foorth on stage with more commendation, than I can looke for; (being there much better set foorth than I have or can dooe) yet the same matter penned as it is, may serve to lyke good effect, if the readers do brynge with them lyke good mindes to consider it, which hath the more encouraged me to publishe it suche as it is." There was, therefore, a play on this subject upon the stage thirty years before the appearance of Shakspeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, but it appears to have been permitted to sink into utter oblivion, and will, perhaps, never be discovered.

As it is, however, evident that Shakspeare was largely indebted to Brooke for the materials of this tragedy, and as the poem is of considerable merit, it may be interesting to relate the few facts which have been ascertained concerning him. He was the author of many pieces in "divers kindes of style;" this poem seems to be but one of several, of it he says:—

The eldest of them loe
I offer to the stake; my youthfull woorke,
Which one reprochefull mouth might overthrowe:
The rest, unlikt as yet, a while shall lurke,
Tyll Tyme geve strength, to meete and match in fight
With Slaunder's whelps. Then shall they tell of stryfe
Of noble tryumphes, and deedes of martial might;
And shall geve rules of chaste and honest lyfe.

From this poem also we learn that he was unmarried, and in some introductory verses to a work published in 1563, called *An Agreement of sundry places of Scripture*, collected by Arthur Brooke, we are told that the author had perished by shipwreck. In a collection of epitaphes, &c., 1567, by George



MR. P. RICHINGS (OF PHILADELPHIA) AS MERCUTIO.

MER: O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you.

ROMEO AND JULIET,

Act 1. Sc 4.

Engraved by J. Moore from a Daguerreotype by Richards of Philadelphia.



CHARLOTTE AND SUSAN CUSHMAN
AS
ROMEO AND JULIET.

ACT 3, SCENE 5.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

Tuberville, there is the following, *On the death of Maister Arthur Brooke, drownde in passing to Newhaven*: —

Apollo lent him lute, for solace sake,
To sound his verse by touch of stately string,
And of the never-fading baye did make
A laurrell crowne, about his browes to cling,
In proufe that he for myter did excell,
As may be judge by *Julyet and her mate*;
For there he shewde his cunning passing well,
When he the tale to English did translate.
But what? as he to forraigne realm was bound,
With others moe his soveraigne queene to serve,
Amid the seas unluckie youth was drownd,
More speedie death than such one did deserve.

Few can fail to admire the admirable construction of this tragedy of our poet's; had it been merely a love story, it would have run the risk of becoming tedious; how artfully this is obviated. The broils of the rival factions of Capulet and Montague, extending even to their humblest retainers; the high spirits of Mercutio, with his lively wit and florid imagination; the unconquerable pugnaciousness of Tybalt, "the very butcher of a silk button;" the garrulous coarseness of the Nurse, and the peevishness of old Capulet; all these give a briskness and rapidity to the early scenes of the play, while the latter ones are, as they should be, almost confined to the afflictions of the two lovers.

Romeo is an idealization of the early youth of genius; he is, in truth, a poet in his love. I fancy that Shakspeare wrote it with a vivid recollection of some early attachment of his own; and that Romeo utters the intense and extravagant passion which a gifted, but affectionate nature, such as Shakspeare might have given way to, before the judgment of maturer years had calmed down this frantic tyranny of love.

The poet has been censured for making Juliet Romeo's second love, and Garrick, in his adaptation of the play, cut out all allusion to Rosaline, whom Romeo first loves, with as much earnestness, and even more extravagance than that which he displays in his subsequent passion for Juliet. But his love for Rosaline was a mere creation of fancy, the feverish excitement of a nature, to which love was a necessity; in her he worshipped an ideal of his own warm imagination, which painted her as an angel amongst women. Shakspeare also indulges a gentle satire on the too positive convictions of youth. Romeo declares his unalterable fidelity to Rosaline, and trusts that when his eyes admit that they have seen her equal, "his tears will turn to fire, and burn the "transparent heretics;" and yet, in one brief hour from this time, even at the first glance, he transfers his love to Juliet. But we can easily forgive this fickleness; we feel angry at the haughty Rosaline, who "hath forsworn to love," for her cold rejection of the passionate affection of Romeo, and pleased that he has found one who receives and returns his passion. His poetic and fervent affection deserves the love which the generous Juliet bestows upon him; and how tender, how devoted, how utterly unselfish is her passion; how modestly beautiful and delicate is her apology for the immediate confession of it.

Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face;
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek,
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night.
Fain would I dwell on form; fain, fain deny
What I have spoke. But farewell compliment!

There is no affected coyness, no frigid conventionality in her demeanour; she is a child of nature yielding to the sweet impulses of a first love, and proclaiming her passion to the object of it with the unrestrained sincerity of an innocent and confiding spirit. Her impatience for the arrival of her husband on the evening of their nuptials has been censured as inconsistent with a becoming modesty, and not to be reconciled with the natural timidity of a young maiden, even of Juliet's warm and impetuous nature. Mr. Hazlitt has finely answered this objection; he says—"Such critics do not

ROMEO AND JULIET.

perceive that the feelings of the heart sanctify, without disguising, the impulses of nature. Without refinement themselves, they confound modesty with hypocrisy." How admirably also does Shakspeare provide for every improbable circumstance, and not only takes away their improbability, but renders them highly consistent and natural; thus when Juliet drinks the potion which is to consign her, a living woman, to a loathsome tomb, she is made to work upon her own imagination by a vivid picture of the horrors of her incarceration in the vault where the festering remains of all her "buried ancestors are packed," and at length swallows the potion in a paroxysm of terror.

The naturalness of the incident is also heightened by the first introduction of the Friar gathering medicinal herbs, and descanting upon their nature and properties. It is likely that he who was so well acquainted with the uses of "baleful weeds and precious juic'd flowers" would employ them to carry out a difficult and dangerous stratagem. Shakspeare seldom omits an opportunity for the utterance of any instructive truth or moral maxim; he was the educator of his audiences, and it gives us a higher opinion of the playgoers of his time to know that they were pleased with the introduction of severe moral truths into their amusements. The language of this Friar is full of them; how fine is the reflection which crosses his mind when going forth in the early dawn to gather his medicinal herbs, and how naturally it arises out of the situation:—

For nought so vile that on the earth doth live,
But to the earth some special good doth give;
Nor aught so good, but, strained from that fair use,
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse.

Mercutio is one of Shakspeare's peculiarities, one of the favourite children of his sportive fancy, bred in the sunshine of his finely balanced mind. The mercurial and brilliant nature of the Veronese gentleman is full of that natural gladness, that "overflow of youthful life, wafted on over the laughing waves of pleasure and prosperity," which few authors besides Shakspeare impart to their creations. Well might Dr. Johnson say that his comedy seems to be instinct.

It may certainly be wished that the language given to Mercutio was less coarse and sensual than it frequently is, but this licentiousness of conversation is consistent with the probable humour of a man in the summer of life, in perfect health, and devoid of all anxiety; and, however repugnant to modern ideas of delicacy and gentlemanly breeding, is perhaps a picture of the discourse of the young nobles and gallants of Shakspeare's own time.

An instance of our poet's power of strongly delineating a character in a few lines, is to be seen in his introduction of the poor apothecary, who is as original a conception, and during his brief scene, wins upon the sympathy of the audience, as much as the hero of the story himself.

This, like most of our poet's tragedies, preaches a stern moral, it shews like a beacon-fire, to warn the young from unsanctioned love and idolatrous passion. Shakspeare probably intended to punish the lovers for the deception they both practise upon indulgent parents, while the parents are, through their children, scourged for their vain feuds and unreasonable hatred. The young die after the first brief hour of joy, the old live on, childless and desolate, to repent the blind malignity which has wrecked the happiness of them all.

H. T.



MISS VANDENHOFF AS JULIET.

JUL. Give me my Romeo: and, when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun. —

ROMEO AND JULIET.
Act 3, Sc. 2.

Engraved by Hollis from a Daguerrotype by Paine of Wilmington.

JOHN TALLIS & COMPANY, LONDON & NEW YORK.



MISS LAURA ADDISON AS IMOGEN.

IMO: So far I read aloud:
 But even the very middle of my heart
 Is warmed by the rest, and takes it thankfully.
 You are as welcome, worthy sir, as I
 Have words to bid you; and shall find it so
 In all that I can do.

CYMBELINE.

Act. I, Sc. 7.

Engraved by Hollis from a Daguerreotype by Paine of Islington.

Cymbeline.

CYMBELINE appears to have been written in the full strength of our poet's maturity; it is attributed to the year 1605, and supposed to have been composed immediately after *King Lear*, and just before *Macbeth*. At such a period of Shakspeare's life, he could scarcely give to the world any feeble production, and we consequently find this play to be full of exquisite poetry, and also to contain the sweetest and most tender female character ever drawn, even by his pen. Still there is, in *Cymbeline*, a singular confusion of times and customs, and the play is full of anachronisms. The rude ancient Britons of the time of Augustus Cæsar are pictured as possessing the manners and luxuries of the Elizabethan period. The polished court of Cymbeline is altogether out of place in Britain at such a time—it is an incredibility; so also is the description of Imogen's chamber, with its tapestry of silk and silver so "rarely and exactly wrought;" and the chimney-piece, with its carving of "chaste Diana bathing," its ornaments of silver, and the golden cherubins with which the roof is fretted. Such things were seen in England in Shakspeare's time; but were never dreamed of in Augustus Cæsar's. In the fifth act also, Posthumus, when condemned to death, is told by his gaoler that "he shall fear no more tavern bills." Schlegel makes a graceful apology for these errors; but it does not greatly mend the matter to argue the poet's faults into beauties. In Shakspeare, as a poet and philosopher, we have implicit faith; but very little, as an antiquarian or historian. He has too luxuriant and wild an imagination to be bound by the rigid fetters of historic truth. It may be said that *King Lear* is equally open to these objections; but *Lear* is scarcely more than a creature of the poet's imagination, only connected with history by dim and remote traditions; and the time of *Cymbeline* is one of which we have more ample and far more certain records. It is not worthy of the critic, or honourable to the memory of the illustrious poet, to point out his beauties only, and remain for ever silent respecting the blemishes in his great works; by following such a course, a false school of criticism and feeling is nursed into active being, and the errors of the dead are reproduced in the writings of the living; for men are gradually led to imitate that which they have been taught blindly to reverence. The vision of Posthumus in his prison is not only inconsistent with the rest of the play, but feebly written, and not worthy of the genius of Shakspeare. Let those who would accuse me of heresy in this remark, turn to and peruse it at once; it is, however, just to the poet to say, that it has been suspected of being an interpolation by some other hand, and Mr. Collier thinks it possible that the vision is part of some older play upon the same subject, which Shakspeare adopted and placed in his production entire.

Our poet's object, however, in writing this play was a noble one; the vindication of the character of woman from the lewd aspersions of thoughtless and unprincipled men. It is not Imogen alone, whom the Italian profligate, Iachimo, slanders—it is her whole sex; of his attempt upon her chastity, he says to her husband:—"I durst attempt it against any lady in the world." Impossible as it may appear to pure and innocent minds, men still live who are ignorant and sensual enough to make the same vile boast. Among the pleasure-seeking gallants of that lascivious age, when seduction and duelling were by a large number of that class considered mere venial vices, if not graceful accomplishments, such unbelievers in the purity of woman were, perhaps, not uncommon; and in this play the bard read them a stern reproof from the stage.

CYMBELINE.

Imogen is a personification of woman; woman enthroned in the holy temple of her pure and chaste affections, rejecting the tempter of her honour with the bitterest scorn and loathing, and enduring wrong and suffering with the most touching patience and sweetness. The gentler sex should be always grateful to the memory of our great Shakspeare, for his genius did sweet homage to their character; he invests his female creations with all that is most pure and generous in humanity, picturing them, indeed, as beautiful to the eye, but a thousand times more acceptable to the heart. There is a moral dignity about his women, a holy strength of affection, which neither suffering nor death can pervert, that elevates them above the sterner nature of man, placing them on an equality with angels. The adventures of Imogen are like a beautiful romance; her flight after her banished husband, her wretchedness and forlorn condition when informed that he believes her false and has given order for her death; her assumption of boy's attire, in which disguise she wanders among the mountains, at point to perish from hunger; her meeting with her disguised brothers in the cave; her supposed death, and recovery, and finally, her discovery of her repentant husband, and throwing herself, without one reproach, upon his bosom—are all beautifully portrayed. Imogen is, indeed, a pattern of connubial love and chastity.

Posthumus is an irritable and impatient character; his love for Imogen is rather a selfish one, or he would not have been so easily persuaded that she was false; it undergoes some purification in his trouble, and we scarcely sympathise with him until his repentance of his rashness. He then doubts his own worthiness, and feeling that he has wickedly presumed to direct the wrath of Heaven and punish its offenders, exclaims:—

Gods! if you
Should have ta'en vengeance on my faults, I never
Had lived to put on this.

A reflection we all might advantageously make, when contemplating revenge for any real or supposed injury.

Iachimo is an unconfirmed villain, as dishonest as Iago, but not so devilish, for he has the grace to repent of his treachery; he tries to compound with his conscience, and satisfy it with jesuitical sophistries. He is ready to attest the truth of his false assertions with an oath, and does absolutely swear to Posthumus that he had the jewel from the arm of Imogen, which is literally true, but morally a perjury, because he stole the bracelet, and led the husband to suspect that it was given him in the gratification of an infamous affection. Iachimo equivocates; Iago would have had no compunction about the matter, but have sworn to any falsehood, however injurious and diabolical, without mental reservation. Iachimo's confession in the last scene is too wordy and tediously prolonged, and the humility of it is scarcely in accordance with his character, as portrayed in the earlier scenes of the play,

These three characters are the principal ones of that group to which the attention is chiefly attracted; Cymbeline, himself, is represented as weak and vacillating—a mere tool of his wicked queen, who says: “I never do him wrong, but he does buy my injuries;” rewards her for them, as if they were benefits: this woman is utterly villanous without any redeeming quality, unless affection for her foolish and unprincipled son be called one; it is seldom that Shakspeare draws such characters, for he loves rather to elevate than to depress humanity, and to paint in sunbeams, than to people twilight with forms of darkness. Perhaps she is introduced to bring the sweet character of the pure and loving Imogen into greater prominence, by the power of contrast. The conduct of Cymbeline is unaccountable, save in a timid and wavering mind; having beaten the Romans by accident, he is amazed at his own temerity, and, in the very triumph of victory, makes a peace, and promises to pay to Cæsar the tribute which he had gone to war to avoid.

Cloten has been said to be so singular a character, and possessed of qualities so contradictory, that he has been supposed to form an exception to Shakspeare's usual integrity in copying from nature.

CYMBELINE.

I cannot see in what particular he is irreconcilable to humanity; he is a knave, a braggart, and a fool in most matters, but that is no reason why he should not possess some shrewd common sense ideas occasionally. Nothing can be happier than his defiance of the Roman ambassador:—"If Cæsar can hide the sun from us with a blanket, or put the moon in his pocket, we will pay him tribute for light; else, sir, no more tribute." Quaintly expressed, certainly, but unanswerable as an argument, it is not Cloten's want of sense, but his outrageous vanity, that makes him ridiculous. He is not half so great a contradiction to himself, as is Polonius, in *Hamlet*, and yet we can easily understand the peculiarities of that character; the weakness of age consuming the strength of maturity, folly encroaching on wisdom; in Cloten, it is folly consuming common sense. Shakspeare requires no justification to the observing mind; few men are either all wisdom or all folly; the writings of the wisest man of whom we have any record, are bitter condemnations of his own actions, eloquent laments for time mis-spent in voluptuous abandonment. I doubt not that the poet drew Cloten from a living model; singularities, in works of fiction, are generally copied from life—they are flights too bold for most authors to take without precedent. Respecting the character of Cloten, Hazlitt has remarked:—"that folly is as often owing to a want of proper sentiments, as to a want of understanding."

In the delineation of the two princes, Guiderius and Arviragus, Shakspeare propagates a doctrine which will find many opponents in the present day: he infers that there is an innate royalty of nature, a sovereignty in blood in those born of a kingly stock; and the young princes brought up as simple rustics, and born of a weak uxorious father, are represented as feeling their high birth so strongly, that it impels them to acts of heroism. Belarius says:—

Their thoughts do hit
The roofs of palaces; and nature prompts them,
In simple and low things, to prince it much
Beyond the trick of others.

Their old protector is a courtier, turned hermit from an acute sense of wrong and a consequent disgust of civilised life, and his language is that of one who has seen the world to satiety: he is full of bitter reflections on princes and their courts, where oft a man gains ill report for doing well, and "must court'sey at the censure." He bears some resemblance to the moralising Jaques, all natural objects suggest to him lofty and religious reflections, and the low-roofed cave which makes him bow as he issues from it to greet the rising sun, instructs him to adore its great Creator. Jaques had been a libertine in his youth, and Belarius is guilty of a dishonourable and wicked revenge, by bringing up the sons of Cymbeline as rustics; the father had injured him, but he had robbed the children of their birthright.

That part of the plot which relates to the adventures of Imogen was suggested to Shakspeare by "the tale told by the fishwife of Stand on the Green," in an old story-book entitled *Westward for Smelts*, in which the story is given in an English dress, and the original of Imogen is a Mrs. Dorrill, who, in the language of the author, was "a creature most beautifull, so that in her time there were few found that matched her, (none at all that excelled her,) so excellent were the gifts that nature had bestowed on her. In body she was not onely so rare, and unparalleled, but also in her gifts of minde; so that this creature it seemed that Grace and Nature strove who should excell each other in their gifts toward her." This story was in its turn taken from the *Decameron* of the Italian novelist Boccacio.

According to Holinshed, Cymbeline, or Kimbeline, began his reign in the nineteenth year of that of Augustus Cæsar, and the play commences in or about the twenty-fourth year of Cymbeline's reign, which was the forty-second of that of Augustus, and the sixteenth of the Christian era.

H. T.

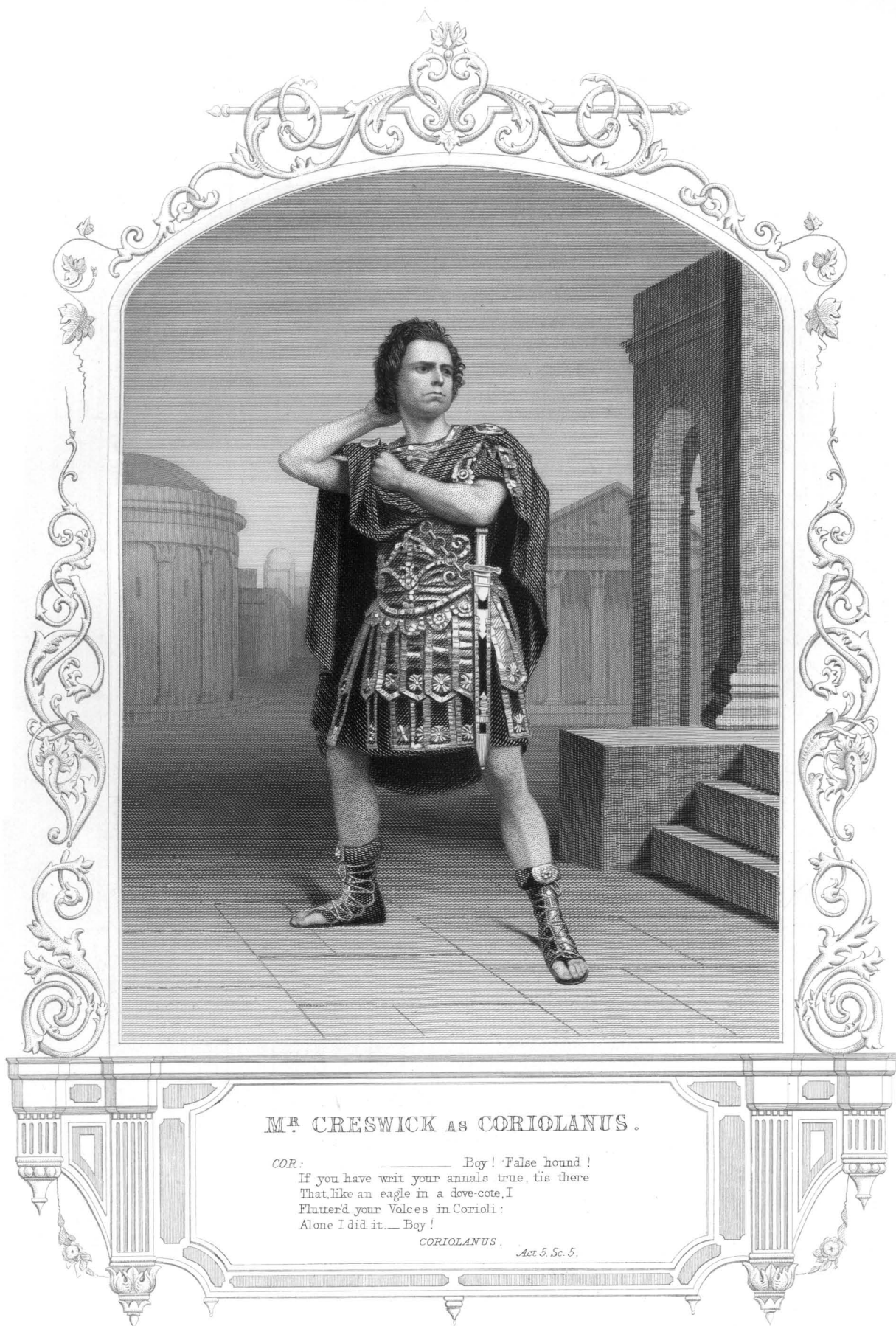
Coriolanus.

IN *Coriolanus*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, the Roman tragedies of Shakspeare, the poet introduces his readers to a new mode of life and feeling; times past are revived, the heroes of the elder ages of the world recalled from their oblivious graves, ruined cities rebuilt, and Rome, in all its ancient glory, with its palaces, columns, and statues, its walks and fountains, its patricians and its people, appear as on some magic orb before us. The busy hum of life is over all, and the heroes of Plutarch seem to live and breathe again; and we analyze their actions and penetrate their motives, as critically as if they were no more remote from us than Cromwell or Napoleon. The great poet throws a bridge over time, and brings us face to face with antiquity; this is peculiarly the case with Shakspeare's Roman dramas; he has given us better and far more accurate pictures of life in the eternal city—

“ That sat on her seven hills
And from her throne of beauty ruled the world.”

Than he has done of the early history of his own country. *Coriolanus*, *Antony*, *Brutus*, *Cæsar*, and *Cassius*, are all poetical Daguerreotypes, in which it is almost difficult to say whether poetry or history are most indebted to our bard.

Coriolanus is, in my estimation, the least interesting of the three tragedies I have named; it displays less variety of character than is contained in *Julius Cæsar*, and less beauty and poetry than the story of the Roman *Antony* and his voluptuous Egyptian Queen. It has been highly popular in the present age, certainly, but that is partially attributable to the excellence of the late John Kemble in the character of the unbending *Marcus*, whose perfect identification of himself with it, made this tragedy attractive at the theatre; and has, since his time, roused a spirit of emulation in other tragedians, who have courted comparison with Kemble in a character for which nature had eminently fitted him. The character of *Marcus* is unamiable almost to repulsiveness; his stern and tyrannical disposition is shewn on his first entrance, when, because the starved citizens complain of hunger, and presume to call in question the wisdom of their governors, he exclaims, had he permission, he would slay as many of them as would make a heap as high as he could hurl his lance. He is praised constantly in the play, but surely the poet never wished to excite our sympathy for this insolent and unfeeling man, but rather intended to show that such a nature could not live in peace with men of any order. He wishes to slay the people, because they offend the patricians; then he would destroy the patricians, because they have offended him; and that he may execute his hate on Rome, having fled to the *Volcians*, who protect and honour him, he finally quarrels with them. He has no patriotism, but a mere selfish love of glory; he is the mercenary of his own feelings, and fights for or against Rome, as it offends or pleases him. It is himself he worships, not his country or his kind; “being moved, he will not spare to gird the gods.” His love to his mother arises from the similarity of their natures, and because she is as haughty and arrogant as he. *Menenius* truly says, “there is no more mercy in him, than there is milk in a male tiger;” the only act of kindness which he does, is to beg the freedom of the poor *Volcian* at whose house he had lodged; but even this grace he mars by forgetting the name of the man whom he would benefit. His scorn and contempt of the common people is more than he can give utterance to; in his language they are rats, crows, curs, and the “musty superfluity” of the city. He would govern them most absolutely, pluck out their



Engraved by W. Bristlestone from a Daguerreotype by Paine of Kingston.



MR. VANDENHOFF AS CORIOLANUS.

COR: Most sweet voices ! —
 Better it is to die, better to starve,
 Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.
Act 2. Sc. 3.

Engraved by G. Greatbatch from a Daguerreotype by Mayall.

CORIOLANUS.

"multitudinous tongue," and take from them all political power. The tribune, Brutus, reproves him justly, by saying:—

You speak o' the people
As if you were a god to punish, not
A man of their infirmity.

He would realize despotism in its most hateful shape, and looks upon the people as a mass of bones and muscles, born only to toil and be despised.

Such a man is unfit for peace: he is a brand in the hands of those who lead him: his actions are the death of order—

Before him
He carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears.

By blood he flourishes, and in blood he falls.

Coleridge says—"This play illustrates the wonderfully philosophic impartiality of Shakspeare's politics." The poet, however, shows himself something of an aristocrat, both here and in *Julius Cæsar*. He seems to entertain a contempt for the common order of people, and places them in a very ridiculous light. The citizens are made mere creatures of fear and contradiction, wafted about by every wind, and won by every suppliant. More stress is laid on the folly of the plebeii than on the vices of the patricians; and if history has recorded the former as fickle, it has not left the latter stainless. Their courage and self-denial sometimes made them regarded as demi-gods, but their vices sunk them below the brutes. The Roman satirists give pictures of life in the great city which fill modern readers with disgust and loathing. Shakspeare laughs at the people; but if he intended Coriolanus to represent the principle of aristocracy, he places that in no very attractive light.

Some apologists for the turbulent character of Marcius have been found who urge the prejudices he had derived from birth and education; from the fact that he was a spoiled child of fortune; and because that, in his day, there were no connecting links between the higher and lower classes, by which they might become known to and respect each other; but these excuses fall very short of a reasonable defence of his haughtiness.

Volumnia, also, has been much praised as a noble character; but she possesses too much of the pride and arrogance of her son, though his nature is certainly softened in her: she is an Amazonian scold, that holds the lives of the Roman citizens in less estimation than a mere whim of her son's; when they have irritated him, she wishes that they may all hang and burn too. She has more experience and wisdom than he; and though she despises and hates the people as much, she truly vaunts she has a brain "that leads her use of anger to better advantage." The softer character of Virgilia shows pale beside her, but it is far more pleasing; the sound of flutes is sweeter than the clang of trumpets; and the tender solicitude of the wife more interesting than the stately ambition of the mother.

Menenius is something between a patrician and a buffoon; his connexions are aristocratic, but his sympathies are with the people: out of his love for Coriolanus he becomes his parasite, and is, in the end, treated by that proud and selfish man with insolence and ingratitude. His application of the fable of the belly and its members to the mutiny of the citizens is apt enough; but we see that, after all, he loves the poor rogues whom he traduces. His great objects of abuse are the tribunes; but they show far more sense than he: they were chosen guardians of the liberty of the people; and in opposing Coriolanus in his attempt at arbitrary power, they but performed their duty. To have done less, would have proved them unworthy of their great trust.

This tragedy, says Mr. Malone, "comprehends a period of about four years, commencing with the secession to the *Mons Sacer*, in the year of Rome, 262, and ending with the death of Coriolanus, A.U.C. 266." It is attributed to the year 1608 or '9, and the historical events are copied with singular fidelity, and even some of the language borrowed from *The Life of Coriolanus*, in Plutarch.

H. T.

Julius Cæsar.

THE whole life of a hero is too comprehensive a subject, and usually embraces far too many incidents, to be effectively treated within the limits of a single tragedy. Many a dark and fearful act has required but an hour for its perpetration, and with the greatly active mind every year is equivalent to an ordinary life. We are made strongly sensible of this, in perusing the present tragedy; its subject is, not the life and deeds of Cæsar, but his death, and the punishment of his assassins: not Cæsar, but Brutus is the hero of the drama. But vigorously as Shakspeare has delineated the character of the great warrior and historian, the brilliant and noble military despot, during the brief time that he appears upon the scene; still, we are disappointed that he disappears so soon, and would willingly that the play had commenced with an earlier period of his life, and that he had remained the hero to its conclusion. The subsequent adventures of Brutus and Cassius would have afforded the great poet ample materials for another tragedy; the first terminating with the death of Cæsar, and the second with the defeat and suicide of his chief assassins.

Julius Cæsar was a character worthy of the closest analytical investigation by the master-mind of Shakspeare; his attainment of power, and his great influence with the Roman people, was entirely attributable to his lofty talents and indomitable courage; his patience under toil, his industry in the pursuit of success, his wise deliberation, and the unshaken steadiness with which he carried out his wonderful resolutions, were the terror of his adversaries, and the astonishment of the world.

Slender and feeble in person, and subject to violent headaches and epileptic fits, he never suffered these natural imperfections to interfere with his plans, or allure him into effeminacy; on one occasion, being out upon an excursion with some friends, they were overtaken by a violent storm, and sought for shelter in a mean hut, consisting of a single room, and that only large enough for one man to sleep in. This was, of course, offered to Cæsar, but he declined it, and saying, "Honours for the great, and necessaries for the infirm," gave it up to his friend Oppius; and himself, and the rest of the company, slept under a shed at the door.

His lofty ambition was shown in many acts of early life: when passing the Alps, he and his friends came to a little town, when one of them said, jestingly, "Can there here be any disputes for offices, any contentions for precedency, or such envy and ambition as we see among the great?" To this, Cæsar replied proudly—"I assure you, I had rather be the first man here, than the second man in Rome." When in Spain, he bestowed his leisure time in reading the history of Alexander, and once, after sitting over it for a long time in a pensive attitude, he burst into tears. His friends inquired the reason of his distress; "Do you think," he replied, "I have not sufficient cause for concern, when Alexander at my age reigned over so many conquered countries, and I have not one glorious achievement to boast."

Plutarch apologises for Cæsar's attempt at sovereignty, and says that his tyranny was merely nominal, for no tyrannical act could be laid to his charge; and he adds—"Nay, such was the condition of Rome, that it evidently required a master; and Cæsar was no more than a tender and skilful physician appointed by Providence to heal the distemper of the state. Perhaps the darkest spot upon his character was his treatment of his son-in-law, Pompey the Great, upon whose destruction he had resolved, for the consolidation of his own power; and whose treacherous murder by the Egyptians formed a dark and fearful close to a brilliant career, spent chiefly in promoting the true interests of mankind. Almost the last words spoken by Pompey were these lines from Sophocles:—

Seek'st thou a tyrant's door? then farewell freedom!
Though free as air before.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

Shakspeare has very artistically alluded to the greatness and the fall of Pompey in the first scene of his tragedy, but he in no way points out Cæsar as the cause of Pompey's ruin and cruel death.

Brutus is delineated with great subtlety ; his lofty integrity and wonderful self-denial, the purity of his life, his gentleness to his dependents, (so touchingly shown in his fatherly consideration for the boy Lucius,) and his noble patriotism, all are exquisitely pictured by the poet. His humanity also appears prominently even at the moment that he is consenting to the death of Cæsar, and he deploras that they cannot destroy him painlessly—come at his spirit without shedding his blood. Brutus is chiefly blamed for his ingratitude to Cæsar, against whom he had fought in conjunction with Pompey ; and Cæsar had not only pardoned him, and sought his friendship, but also forgave all for whom he interceded. Brutus says—

I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
But for the general. He would be crowned ;

and the unbending republican sacrifices his friend to his country ; and sheds the blood of Cæsar, not for what he had done, but, for what he feared he would ultimately do. This is an act of injustice, for which Brutus is punished by the failure of his cause, and his own premature and violent death.

" Brutus," says Mr. Drake, " the favourite of the poet, is brought forward, not only adorned with all the virtues attributed to him by Plutarch, but, in order to excite a deeper interest in his favour, and to prove that not jealousy, ambition, or revenge ; but unalloyed patriotism, was the sole director of his conduct—our author has drawn him as possessing the utmost sweetness and gentleness of disposition, sympathising with all that suffer, and unwilling to inflict pain, but from motives of the strongest moral necessity. He has most feelingly and beautifully painted him in the relations of a master, a friend, and a husband ; his kindness to his domestics, his attachment to his friends, and his love to Portia, demonstrating that nothing but a high sense of public duty could have induced him to lift his hand against Cæsar. It is this struggle between the humanity of his temper, and his ardent and hereditary love of liberty, now threatened with extinction, by the despotism of Cæsar, that gives to Brutus that grandeur of character, and that predominancy over his associates in purity of intention, which secured to him the admiration of his contemporaries, and to which posterity has done ample justice, through the medium of Shakspeare, who has placed the virtues of Brutus, and the contest in his bosom between private regard and patriotic duty, in the noblest light ; wringing, even from the lips of his bitterest enemy, the fullest eulogium on the rectitude of his principles and the goodness of his heart."

Cassius is a man of more worldly wisdom than Brutus : his great tact and knowledge of human nature is displayed in his remark to Antony, to reconcile him to the murder of Cæsar :—

Your voice shall be as strong as any man's
In the disposing of new dignities.

Many touches of this worldliness appear in him : he is eminently fitted for a conspirator ; but is still noble. We feel that Mark Antony, in his hour of triumph, slanders the memory of Cassius, in attributing his conspiring against Cæsar merely to envy. The scene in the streets of Rome, where Cassius walks through the storm at night, amid the prodigies that foretell the death of the ambitious dictator, and bares his " bosom to the thunder-stone," is the sublime of tragedy : it raises our expectations to the highest pitch, and is a fitting prelude to the approaching catastrophe ; when Cæsar, surrounded by fierce looks and glittering swords, and gashed with three-and-twenty hideous wounds, falls dead on the base of his rival's statue, which is bespattered with his blood, and is supposed to look down, with grim satisfaction, on the death of his destroyer. The following scene, where Brutus, in his orchard, meditates the death of Cæsar, is finer still : his struggle between tenderness and duty—his love for his friend, and his love for his country—his high bearing to his fellow-conspirators, where he deprecates the necessity of an oath to bind just men " that have spoke the word, and will not palter"—and his generous yielding of the secret to his heroic and noble wife—are all pregnant with the vivid fire of genius—all

JULIUS CÆSAR.

point to Shakspeare as the master-bard, who, with exquisite and unerring colouring, has filled up the spirited sketches of Plutarch.

The speech of Brutus, in justification of his conduct, is a cold and feeble oration, but perhaps consistent with the stoical calmness of his temper: the fiery and eager Cassius would have made an infinitely better one. Antony's oration is a master-piece of eloquence—appealing, convincing, and then urging his listeners to vengeance. Shakspeare treats the Roman people with too much levity. He certainly makes them very amusing, and brings them in, in admirable contrast to the serious characters and events of his tragedy. But they did not deserve this sarcasm: any people would have been affected by the brilliant and touching speech of Antony; and the Romans were, in reality, disposed to side with him, rather than with the conspirators. They only wanted reminding of the benefits Cæsar had conferred upon them, to break out into lamentation for his fall. Plutarch tells us—"The people lamented his death, and were implacably enraged against his assassins." But Shakspeare forcibly points out the fatal consequences of popular excitement and fury, by representing the people, in the wildness of their ungoverned passion, tearing to pieces the unfortunate poet, Cinna, because he had the misfortune to possess the same name as one of the conspirators.

The parting of Brutus and Cassius on the eve of the battle at Philippi is beautifully touching; a cloud of sadness hangs over them; an ominous feeling that this is their "everlasting farewell," appears to strike them both, and despondency struggles with natural courage and determination. Cassius meets with a reverse of fortune, and then doubt of his partner's success—doubt, that "hateful error, melancholy's child," overcomes his failing heart, and urges him to the Roman hero's last refuge—suicide. The death of Brutus is melancholy in the extreme; the painful loss of his beloved Portia first shakes his heart, then follows the death of his friend Cassius, the defeat of his army, and with it the destruction of the republican cause. He recognises the hand of fate in it, and believing the gods to be adverse to his enterprise, exclaims:—

O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!
Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords
In our own proper entrails.

The cold and selfish character of Octavius is strongly traced; his first act of power is one of cruelty, that of the proscription of the senators; the rest of his conduct is marked by littleness and cunning. In the early part of the tragedy, Shakspeare introduces one of that class of characters that are almost peculiar to his pen, Casca, whose humorous bluntness lends variety and contrast to the opening scenes; "his rudeness" is truly, "a sauce to his good wit." It would have been interesting to the readers of the Roman classics, if Shakspeare had introduced the orator Cicero more prominently; at present he is lost in the crowd of illustrious men who fill the scene and support the action, and when brought forward, is treated rather contemptuously than otherwise; but the great mass of materials the poet had in hand would not permit any further elaboration. Indeed, those who will trouble themselves to trace the history of the period will be astonished at the consummate art which Shakspeare has used in the arrangement of events, and in the manner in which he has thrown the less important ones into perspective.

This tragedy, which Shakspeare founded on events related by Plutarch, is attributed to the year 1607; in the same year, a tragedy upon the fate of Cæsar was published by William Alexander, afterwards Earl Sterline, but was not adapted for representation; and Gosson, in his *School of Abuse*, 1579, mentions a play by an anonymous author, entitled *The History of Cæsar and Pompey*. It does not appear that Shakspeare was indebted to either of these tragedies for any hint for his own, although in Earl Sterline's drama, some passages are found bearing a feeble resemblance to others in Shakspeare; but these, probably, have proceeded only from the two authors writing upon the same subject, and both borrowing their materials from the same source.



MISS GLYN AS CLEOPATRA.

I'll none now:
 Give me mine angle; we'll to the river; there,
 My music playing far off, I will betray
 Tawney-finned fishes; my bended hook shall pierce
 Their slimy jaws; and, as I draw them up,
 I'll think them every one an Antony,
 And say "Ah, Ah! you're caught."

ANTONY & CLEOPATRA. Act 2 Sc. 5.

Engraved by Hollis from a Daguerreotype by Paine & Islington.

Antony and Cleopatra.

THIS varied and gorgeous historical tragedy, though perfect in itself, may yet be regarded as a continuation of *Julius Cæsar*; in the commencement of that play absolute power is lodged in one man, a wide circle of terrible events roll on, every effort is made by the republican party, and much noble blood spilt, to preserve the political freedom of Rome; but the wheel comes round, and the conclusion of *Antony and Cleopatra* sees a second Cæsar in possession of that absolute power which the first met his death in attempting to consolidate, and the three divisions of the Roman world are at length united under one imperial ruler. How true is it that the history of most men's lives is merely a record of wasted energy!

In *Julius Cæsar* the character of Antony is but slightly sketched, but it is here elaborated with a truthful and powerful pen; there Antony is shown only as the orator, whose words have robbed their honey from the Hybla bees; here as the magnificent triumvir, the heroic soldier, and the imitator, in his dissipation, of his patron gods, Bacchus and Hercules.

Antony is a singular mixture of contending qualities; brave and generous, yet selfishly luxurious in his habits; a hardy soldier, yet an effeminate man, condescending and affable so far as to drink and jest with his soldiers, yet so proud and imperious as to make princes his vassals, and to bestow upon his sons the vain-glorious title of "the kings of kings." His virtues and his vices seemed to wrestle for the possession of the man; and although the latter triumphed, yet Antony so sinned that men often admired while they condemned. His enormous prodigality blinded the popular judgment; such was his liberality that while at Ephesus he gave his cook the estate of a Magnesian citizen for dressing one supper to his taste; and while there he was constantly attended by women in the dress of Bacchanals, and men and boys habited like Pan and the Satyrs marched before him; besides this, he entertained almost an army of players, dancers, and buffoons. After the death of Cæsar, Antony, from motives of policy, made his peace with the conspirators, and on the same evening supped with Cassius. In his oration at the funeral, he was not only influenced by his personal affection for that distinguished man, but also by an ambitious longing, which induced him to believe that if Brutus were slain or banished, he would become the greatest man in Rome. That his motives were largely selfish in this transaction is shown by Antony retaining Cæsar's will, of which he made some unjust uses, giving legacies to his personal friends and supporters; and for some time he refused to acknowledge Octavius as his partner either in the wealth or power left by Julius; but Octavius not being easily repulsed, he at length admitted him.

The blackest spot on his character is his proscription and murder of Rome's greatest orator, Cicero, with whom, notwithstanding his vanity, we, at the present day, will cordially exclaim:—

Let arms revere the robe, the warrior's laurel
Yield to the palm of eloquence

Cicero, who had great influence with the people, incensed them against Antony, and prevailed on the senate to declare him an enemy of the state; when, therefore, Cæsar and Lepidus had consented to the death of the aged orator, Antony, with a revolting malignity which the most partial historian must blush to record, had his head and hands struck off; and when they were brought to him, laughed and triumphed at the sight, and ordered them to be stuck up on the *rostra* in the forum, as though he was still addressing the people.

The personal appearance of Antony is thus described by Plutarch, from whom Shakspeare borrowed the materials for this tragedy: "Antony had a noble dignity of countenance, a graceful length of beard,

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a large forehead, an aquiline nose; and upon the whole the same manly aspect that we see in the pictures and statues of Hercules. There was, indeed, an ancient tradition, that his family was descended from Hercules, by a son of his, called Anteon; and it was no wonder if Antony sought to confirm this opinion, by affecting to resemble him in his air and in his dress."

Generous but rapacious, a great general but a greater voluptuary, "such was the frail, the flexible Antony, when the love of Cleopatra came in to the completion of his ruin. This awakened every dormant vice, inflamed every guilty passion, and totally extinguished the gleams of remaining virtue." His first meeting with the captivating Egyptian occurred thus: he sent her his commands to meet him in Cilicia to answer some accusations laid against her of assisting Cassius in his war against Antony and Octavius. The messenger, seeing the great beauty and fascination of Cleopatra, immediately concluded that she had nothing to fear from the gallant Antony:—

Whom ne'er the word of 'No,' woman heard speak.

and therefore paid great court to her, and solicited her to go "in her best attire." This hint was not lost upon the quick-witted Egyptian: she went, but it was not to sue, but to conquer.

Shakspeare has closely followed Plutarch in his gorgeous description of Cleopatra sailing to meet Antony down the river Cydnus, though he has certainly beautified that exquisite narrative, throwing a soft voluptuous languor into it, singularly consistent with the scene, and breathing the very soul of beauty. Cleopatra was the widow of King Ptolemy, and had been the paramour of Cæsar; the early spring of youth was therefore past, but she was still in the summer of her beauty; nay, she had not yet reached the full meridian of womanly maturity; her vivacity was even beyond her personal attractions, and her conversational powers were remarkably varied and brilliant, while her voice was singularly melodious, and had the softness of music. Her beauty, we are told, was not so remarkable as her manners were fascinating and irresistible. Her accomplishments also were very great, and she spoke most languages freely, giving audience herself, without the aid of interpreters, to the ambassadors of the Ethiopians, Hebrews, Arabs, Syrians, Medes, and Parthians. Besides, she had the gift of flattering in a very delicate and subtle manner: thus in the famous anecdote of Antony's fishing excursion, when one of her divers placed a salt fish on his hook, and he drew it up amidst general merriment (an incident which Shakspeare makes use of in the play), her comment was an instance of consummate tact in this direction—"Go, general!" said she, "leave fishing to us petty princes of Pharos and Canopus; your game is cities, kingdoms, and provinces."

Cleopatra completely enslaved the affections of Antony, and carried him in triumph with her to Alexandria, where they passed their time in feasts and revels, and established a society of their friends, whom they called the *Inimitable Livers*.

Antony's marriage with Octavia after the death of his first wife, Fulvia, was merely an act of political expediency; we feel that Enobarbus is right, when he says, Antony "will to his Egyptian dish again." In the play the incidents are drawn closely together, and Antony's desertion of Octavia seems immediately to follow his marriage, but this was not the case; he had lived with her long enough to become the father of three children, before he left her for the embraces of Cleopatra, to whom, on his return, he bestowed kingdoms for presents, and in his inordinate vanity, gave the names of the sun and the moon to the twins she bore him. Octavius Cæsar was glad of a pretext to quarrel with Antony; he had disposed of his colleague, Lepidus, and could he also dispose of Antony, the whole Roman Empire would be under his authority; he therefore availed himself of the insult offered to his sister, and made war upon Cleopatra; the final result of which was the ruin and suicide both of her and her princely paramour. The superstition of the times heralded in this event with omens and prodigies, in the same manner as they did the assassination of Julius Cæsar; Pisanum, a colony of Antony's on the Adriatic, was swallowed by an earthquake, and his statue at Alba was said to have been covered with sweat for many days, although it was frequently wiped off; the statue thus shewing a sympathy for the coming fall of its original.

Antony's power was sufficient to have made him conqueror of the civilised world; he had five hundred

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armed vessels, each with eight or ten banks of oars, a hundred thousand foot soldiers, and twelve thousand horse; and Shakspeare has in the play, enumerated the kings and princes who fought under his banner. But his affection for Cleopatra had subdued both his judgment and his valour, and he fled disgracefully before Cæsar; for a time he was deeply dejected, and lived in melancholy retirement, but he soon returned to Alexandria, and again gave way to festivity and enjoyment. In conjunction with Cleopatra, he now established a society which they called *The Companions in Death*, into which they admitted their immediate adherents, and spent their time in continual feasting and diversions.

After Octavius had returned a haughty refusal to Antony's challenge to single combat, the latter determined to risk all on one last battle; he did so, and lost it, for his fleet and cavalry deserted him, while his infantry were defeated. The rest of the story is both faithfully and elaborately told in Shakspeare's tragedy.

In the play there are four characters which stand out prominently from the canvass—Cleopatra, Antony, Cæsar, and Enobarbus. Of Cleopatra, as painted by the pencil of history, I have already spoken; how exquisitely she is depicted by Shakspeare; what a soft glow of voluptuous languor is thrown around her, and with what irresistible fascinations she is invested, the reader of the tragedy can alone feel and appreciate. Great as her faults are, for her life is but a tissue of refined and poetical sensuality, such is her devotion to Antony, and so winning is the gigantic extravagance of her affection for him, that we not only forgive her errors, but admire and applaud the actor of them.

Antony and Cæsar are placed in strong contrast to each other; the one brave, reckless and prodigal, the other cool, prudent, and avaricious. "Cæsar gets money," says Pompey, "where he loses hearts." Antony is a warrior and a prodigal, and Octavius a statesman, whose feelings are strictly under command. Something of predestination reigns through this play; everything tends towards the downfall of Antony and the advancement of Cæsar.

Enobarbus, although an historical character, and to be found in Plutarch, does not there appear very prominently, and may, to no small extent, be called a creation of the pen of Shakspeare. He found the name in history, but not the man he pictured. Enobarbus forms one of the rich sunlights of the picture; his plain bluntness has all the cheering hilarity of comedy. But his jocularity would be out of place in the latter scenes of the tragedy: how admirably does Shakspeare obviate this. The dotage and ill-fortune of Antony transform Enobarbus to a serious man, and finally corrupt this hitherto faithful soldier; he deserts his master, and flies to the service of Cæsar. The munificent Antony sends after him his chests and treasure, which, in the hurry of flight, he had left behind; this act of kindness strikes the penitent fugitive to the heart, and wasting in grief, he goes forth to die; and alone, without the camp, breathing his deep sorrow to the cold moon, does Enobarbus end his life in the bitterness of despair.

As his final ruin draws on, Antony is alternately "valiant and dejected;" looking upon his high rank and qualities, his unbounded but dazzling dissipation, his imperial generosity, great personal courage, and his gorgeous career; when hearing of his death, we feel inclined to say with Cæsar—

The death of Antony

Is not a single doom: in the name lay

A moiety of the world.

That of Cleopatra follows; it is consistent with her brilliant and luxurious life; she robs death of its hideousness, and, enveloped in her royal robes and crown, still radiant in that seductive beauty which subdued Cæsar and ruined Antony, she applies to her bosom the envenomed instrument of death, and falls into an everlasting slumber "as sweet as balm, as soft as air," where she yet looks:—

As she would catch another Antony

In her strong toil of grace.

This tragedy is attributed to the year 1608.

II. T.

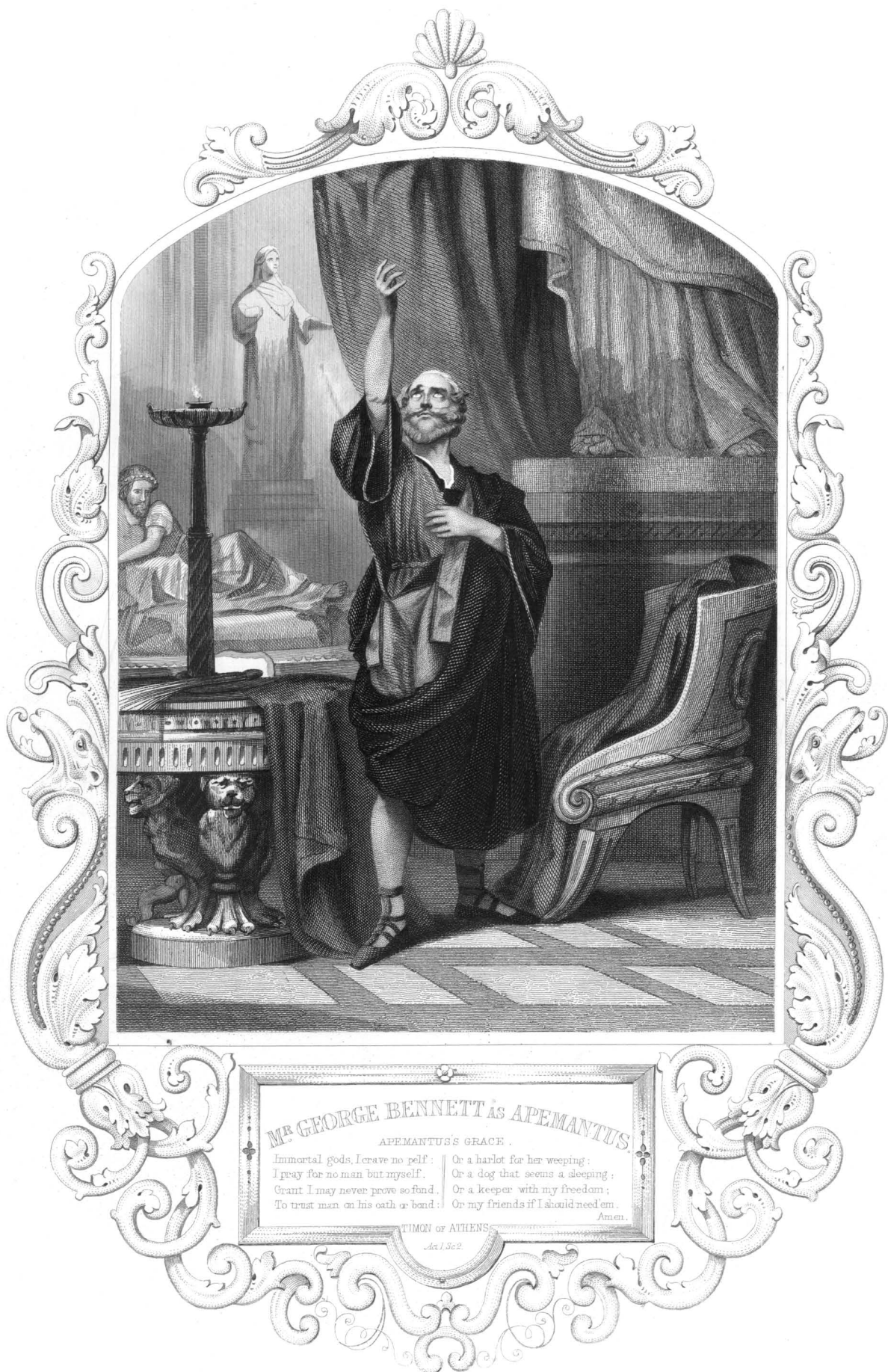
Timon of Athens.

WHILE engaged in reading Plutarch, to obtain the facts on which he founded *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakspeare met with a passage which furnished him with a subject for a separate and very dissimilar tragedy. In Antony's reverse of fortune, after one of his defeats by Octavius Cæsar, he retired to a small house which he had built near Pharos, on a mound he had cast up in the sea, where he affected to live like Timon. "This Timon," says the chatty Greek biographer, "was a citizen of Athens, and lived about the time of the Peloponnesian war, as appears from the comedies of Aristophanes and Plato, in which he is exposed as the hater of mankind. Yet though he hated mankind in general, he caressed the bold and impudent boy Alcibiades, and being asked the reason of this by Apemantus, who expressed some surprise at it, he answered, it was because he foresaw that he would plague the people of Athens. Apemantus was the only one he admitted to his society, and he was his friend in point of principle. At the feast of sacrifices for the dead, these two dined by themselves, and when Apemantus observed that the feast was excellent, Timon answered, 'It would be so if you were not here.' Once in an assembly of the people, he mounted the rostrum, and the novelty of the thing occasioned an universal silence and expectation; at length he said, 'People of Athens, there is a fig-tree in my yard, on which many worthy citizens have hanged themselves; and as I have determined to build upon the spot, I thought it necessary to give this public notice, that such as choose to have recourse to this tree for the aforesaid purpose may repair to it before it is cut down.'"

From this passage Shakspeare derived that portion of his tragedy which relates to Timon, though, perhaps, he was also indebted to a manuscript play upon the same subject which "appears to have been written, or transcribed," says Mr. Malone, "about the year 1600. There is a scene in it resembling Shakspeare's banquet given by Timon to his flatterers. Instead of warm water he sets before them stones painted like artichokes, and afterwards beats them out of the room. He then retires to the woods, attended by his faithful steward, who (like Kent in *King Lear*) has disguised himself to continue his services to his master; Timon in the last act is followed by his fickle mistress, &c., after he was reported to have discovered a hidden treasure by digging. The piece itself (though it appears to be the work of an academic) is a very wretched one."

The plot of Shakspeare's tragedy is very simple: the principal event is Timon's loss of faith in humanity, and the consequent change of the generous and unsuspecting noble, who regrets that he has not kingdoms to bestow upon his friends, into the bitter and malignant misanthrope whose fearful denunciations of mankind strike his listeners into "strong shudders." The play is full of violent contrasts; luxury and abstemiousness, pomp and poverty, prodigality and avarice, love and hate, succeed each other rapidly. It is like a dissolving view which melts from bright day, made lovely with natural beauties, the songs of birds, the fragrance of flowers, the rich and varied foliage, and the spray of the waterfall, gilded by the cheering sunshine; to black midnight in which even the stars are hid. The change is abrupt, startling, and complete, and the gay generous Timon disappears in the bitter savage, who repudiates civilization, and spends the residue of his life in breathing eloquent curses upon his ungrateful countrymen.

Timon's is a wordy sorrow; he does not shut himself up in sullen impenetrability, but enters into converse with all who seek him, and relieves his feelings by bitter invectives. Like Coriolanus he abandons his native city, but he cannot, like the stern Roman, enfold himself in his own pride and estimation, and despise his countrymen. Coriolanus addressed himself to revenge his supposed wrongs: Timon contents himself with cursing the authors of his real ones. There is, besides, a quaintness and



Engraved by J. Sheriatt, from a Daguerreotype by Paine of Islingsmo.

JOHN TAYLOR & COMPANY, LONDON & NEW YORK.

TIMON OF ATHENS.

pithiness about the speeches of Timon that seems hardly consistent with a heart-broken and dying man. Like a splenetic wrangler he is anxious to get the best of the argument; he endeavours to rival Apemantus in abuse, invents an apology for the thieves, and is bitterly pleasant with the poet and the painter. He is full of life and energy all the time he is before us; he disappears suddenly from the scene, and his death is a mystery. He calculates upon it, knows its precise period, and even builds his own tomb; but the immediate cause of it is unknown. Perhaps the poet intends to imply that Timon lays violent hands upon himself, for his death seems to follow too rapidly upon his misfortunes to be the mere effect of grief and passion.

Apemantus is another Diogenes, bitter and cynical by nature, naturally perverse, and loving singularity, but possessed of a keen caustic wit, and uttering many moral and wise aphorisms. He also has been called a misanthrope, though from different motives than Timon, but he rather dislikes and despises men than hates them. He dwells perpetually on what is gross and evil in the world, and his ideas become oblique and one-sided. He is keen in the detection of vice or folly, and on his first entrance we see that he knows the weakness of Timon's character, when he tells him, that "he who loves to be flattered is worthy o' the flatterer." But Apemantus is dull and obtuse in the appreciation of virtue or loftiness of character; not understanding them he disbelieves their existence. His gaze is fixed for ever upon the earth; he cannot look up and see the heavens. He would sooner meet with deformity than beauty, and with vice than virtue, because he can more readily pour out his rancour upon it. Even in his religious moments he can scarcely be civil to the gods, and his prayer resembles a malediction.

Quiet virtue sometimes runs a risk of falling into insipidity and apathy or inaction: thus we find Flavius, the faithful steward, the single truly honest heart in the drama, a rather feeble character; he reserves his expostulations until his master's ruin, and then utters that which, if strongly urged before, might have checked Timon's wild course of reckless extravagance. The honesty of the weak is too often eclipsed by the worldliness of the strong, and energy of character is so admirable that it excuses many minor vices.

Even to the least important characters Shakspeare has extended his fullest consideration. The poet and the painter each speaks his own peculiar language; the artist idolises his own work, and the poet describes it in elevated diction. The first speaks the language of every day life, and the latter that of the study; his words remind us of the chamber and the lamp, and like the speeches of the Roman orator Cicero, seemed studied for the occasion. Again the servants of Timon describe their master's ruin with great feeling; one says:—

And his poor self,
A dedicated beggar to the air,
With his disease of all-shunn'd poverty,
Walks, like contempt, alone.

This is the language of a nameless character, a second servant; some authors would have given it to the hero of their play, but Shakspeare was a very Timon in respect of his lavishness of poetical beauty; exquisite thoughts appear in his pages like the smaller stars, in radiant clusters. Still this liberality seems to have been involuntary, for words of strength and beauty fall from his pen with the same profusion as diamonds and roses fell from the lips of the little girl in the fairy tale; which we have all read and wondered at when children. But the language of the poet is not a cloying collection of sweets; his power is greater than his beauty. The words of Timon in his adversity are like poisoned arrows, bitter, rancorous, and deadly. His curses are a collection of horrors, aimed without reservation upon all mankind, upon the young and laughing girl just bursting from childhood, and on the "old limping sire," tottering to the grave. He supplicates the demons of lust and murder to confound his native city, and to desolate the world, and implores the earth itself no longer to bring forth ungrateful man, but to "teem with new monsters," and "go great with tigers, dragons, wolves, and bears," as being less corrupt and mischievous.

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It is to be regretted, however, that Shakspeare should so often have recurrence to offensive and loathsome ideas; Timon's language is not only bitter and malignant, but frequently revolting; all that is disgusting in the annals of disease is eagerly seized upon by the misanthrope, and pictures are presented which make the vicious shudder and the pure recoil in amazement.

The tragedy includes two incidents, each arising from a similar cause,—the flight of Timon and the banishment of Alcibiades; let us now turn our attention to the latter. Shakspeare also found his life in Plutarch, but the poet has not very fully elaborated the character of the Athenian general. Alcibiades was famous for his great personal beauty, his stubborn and ambitious temper, his eloquence, craftiness, and dissipation. His resolution was strongly shown even in his boyhood; for it is related that on one occasion he was playing at dice with some other boys in the street, when a loaded waggon coming up interrupted the game; Alcibiades called to the driver to stop, as it was his turn to throw, but the man disregarded him and drove on; while the other boys got out of the way, Alcibiades however was not to be so readily overcome, for throwing himself flat upon his face directly before the waggon, he told the rustic to drive on if he pleased. Upon this the man was so startled that he instantly stopped his horses, and the resolute boy got up and had his throw with the dice. Brought up in luxury, and universally courted, he gave way to every dissipation, but was still exceedingly attached to the philosopher Socrates.

When still a young man, Alcibiades happened to enter a grammar school, and asked the master for a copy of Homer. The pedagogue replied that he had nothing of Homer's, and immediately received a box on the ear from the indignant young soldier, for his neglect of the works of the great father of ancient poetry. Another story is told of him which shows an unhealthy love of distinction of any kind. He purchased a dog of remarkable size and beauty, for the extravagant sum of seventy *minæ*.* The chief beauty of this dog was his tail, which Alcibiades immediately caused to be cut off. This singular act furnished conversation for the whole city, and he was much censured for his folly and extravagance. He then laughed and said, "this is the very thing I wanted, for I would have the Athenians talk of this, lest they should find something worse to say of me." Shakspeare might have drawn a striking contrast between the characters of Alcibiades and Timon, but he has neglected the former for the perfect development of the latter. Both leave their native city through the ingratitude of their countrymen, but the resolute and worldly man returns in conquest and in honour, while the effeminate and feeble one perishes in solitude and despair. Plutarch compares Alcibiades with Coriolanus, but their circumstances only were alike, the men were widely different; both returned from banishment with an army at their heels, bent upon the destruction of their native cities; but the haughty and self-denying Roman is in most other matters the reverse of the subtle and luxurious Greek, of whom Plutarch tells us that, "his great abilities in politics, his eloquence, his reach of genius, and keenness of apprehension, were tarnished by his luxurious living, his drinking and debauches, his effeminacy of dress, and his insolent profusion."

Shakspeare does not adhere to history respecting the cause of the banishment of Alcibiades. He was accused of sacrilege towards the goddesses Ceres and Proserpine, and condemned to death, but he saved himself by taking refuge among the Spartans; to whose hospitality he made a vile return by seducing the wife of their king Agis. After a life spent in dissipation, war, and political intrigue, he was at length assassinated by a secret order of the magistrates of Sparta. He was at that time living in a small village in Phrygia with his mistress Timandra. His murderers surrounded the house at night and set it on fire, and on his issuing out sword in hand they fled to a distance and slew him with their darts and arrows. He was buried by Timandra as honourably as her circumstances would permit.

Timon of Athens is supposed to have been written by Shakspeare in the year 1609, and to have immediately followed the composition of *Antony and Cleopatra*.H. T.

* The *minæ* was equivalent to £3 4s. 7d. of our money. Alcibiades' dog therefore cost him £226 0s. 10d. A talent was sixty *minæ* or £193 15s.

Troilus and Cressida.

SHAKSPERE, in the two concluding lines of the prologue to this play, appears to have anticipated that it would not be exceedingly popular; to say the truth, it is the most desultory and rambling of his acknowledged works: extending over too great a period of time for the poet fairly to grasp, consisting of too many incidents for effective combination, and of too many characters to permit of their complete development. In this play we miss that constructive art which is generally to be traced in the works of Shakspeare; it is less a drama than a narrative; the story is unconnected and incomplete, and the end is no conclusion. Hector, the hero and favourite of the poet—the brave, yet gentle and generous Hector—is shamefully murdered, in violation both of the laws of arms and humanity, and the large-limbed savage who hacks him to death by deputy, escapes unhurt and in triumph. Troilus talks largely of revenge, but accomplishes none; Cressida is false and unpunished, and, we are to suppose, lives to be the happy mistress of Diomedes, until her voluptuous and fickle nature prompts her to abandon him as readily as she has previously left Troilus.

The destruction of Troy would have been a theme worthy of the pen of Shakspeare, had he confined his overflowing and sometimes erratic genius to his subject; he had admirable materials in his hand, had he attempted less. The play abounds with characters, but they are introduced and then abandoned: before we are fairly acquainted with them, they vanish. Cressida is little more than a sketch, and Cassandra, the mad prophetess, something less than one. The best developed character is Pandarus, and he is altogether contemptible. Thersites is probably the original of Apemantus; there is, at least, a resemblance between them, but the latter is the most finished character. Shakspeare apparently intended to create a sympathy and admiration for Troilus, for he makes “that same dog-fox, Ulysses,” speak eloquently in his favour, comparing him with Hector, and declaring that he was:—

Not yet mature, yet matchless; firm of word;
Speaking in deeds, and deedless in his tongue;
Not soon provoked, nor, being provoked, soon calmed:
His heart and hand both open and both free.

Still, a mere lover is generally an insipid creation, and Troilus is scarcely an exception to the rule; he wants purpose, decision, and moral courage. The conduct of Pandarus is mean and officious enough, but Troilus shares his shame by employing him. Cressida was open to be wooed, and easy to be won; she is sufficiently complying, in all conscience, and only retires when she is feebly pursued. Had Troilus won her in an open, manly manner, he would probably have preserved both her affection and her honour. Fanciful, giddy coquette as she is, she would have remained virtuous, had she not encountered temptation.

But I must qualify my censure; vague as the play is, it is full of fine poetry and profound observations; if we are for a moment angry with Shakspeare for his wanderings or his inconsistency, he soon wins us back to him with bribes of thought and beauty. The play also has many fine scenes; for instance, that between Cressida and her uncle, in the first act, is remarkable for sparkling dialogue; the same may be said of the first scene of the second act, between the savage jester Thersites, and the blunt Ajax. The short scene in the third act, where Helen is introduced, is exceedingly natural and lively; the equivocations of the servant whom Pandarus addresses, are fully as humorous as the sayings of the licensed fools in other of our poet's plays. The following scene in the garden of Pandarus, where the lovers meet and confess their affection, is exceedingly beautiful; we are reminded for a moment of a similar scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, but the resemblance soon ceases—the passionate, though chaste and womanly affection of Juliet, compared to the wanton

'TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

appetite of Cressida, is as a pure bright star in heaven to the cold delusive fire which dances in darkness over the stagnant pool or trackless marsh. The dialogue between Achilles and Hector, after the tournament, is in Shakspeare's happiest style. The bulky Achilles scanning the Trojan prince with his eyes, and soliciting the gods to tell him in what part of his body he should destroy great Hector, is the sublime of chivalry. Hector's passionate rejoinder:—

Henceforth, guard thee well ;
For I 'll not kill thee there, nor there, nor there ;
But, by the forge that stithed Mars his helm,
I 'll kill thee everywhere, yea, o'er and o'er.

is equally fine ; while the whole of the fifth act is full of vigour and bustle, and exceedingly animated.

Schlegel ingeniously accounts for the manner in which Shakspeare has treated this subject by saying:—"The whole is one continued irony of that crown of all heroic tales, the tale of Troy. The contemptible nature of the Trojan war, the laziness and discord with which it was carried on, so that the siege was made to last ten years, are only placed in clearer light by the noble descriptions, the sage and ingenious maxims with which the work overflows, and the high ideas which the heroes entertain of themselves and each other."

Shakspeare is supposed to have produced this drama in 1601 or 1602 ; he borrowed the story chiefly from Chaucer's poem of the same name ; though he was also indebted to Lydgate's *Historie of the Destruction of Troy*, and the first seven books of Chapman's translation of Homer. But his chief obligations were certainly to Chaucer, who details the love of Troilus and Cressida, and the assistance they derived from Pandarus, at great length. In his story Troilus is slain by Achilles ; and, says the venerable old gossip :—

And whan that he was slain in this manere
His lightè goste ful blisfully is went
Up to the holownesse of the seventh sphere,
In his place leting everiche element,
And there he sawe, with ful avisèment,
The erratike sterres, hearkening harmonie,
With sownis ful of hevin's melodie.

And down from thennis fast he gan avise
This litil spotte of erth that with the se
Embraced is, and fully gan dispise
This wretchid world, and helde al vanite
In respecte of the plaine felicitye
That is in heven above, and at the last
There he was slaine his loking down he cast.

The old poet's story consists of eighteen hundred and sixty-nine stanzas, and is, in my estimation, sufficiently tedious to wade through. It may be very barbarous and tasteless to say so : but although sentiments, which might be eloquent but for the rude and obsolete language in which they are expressed, occasionally occur, still the whole tale does not contain one great or brilliant thought, or one exquisitely poetical simile. Little more than a century and-a-half occurred between the death of Chaucer and the birth of Shakspeare, yet the works of the former are obsolete and half-forgotten, while the dramas of the latter are yet as fresh, vivid, and attractive as if they had but just been given to the world. The works of Chaucer have but a feeble ray of genius, cold and flickering—those of Shakspeare contain a pregnant heat of vital power which attracts and warms all hearts.

In the collected works of Chaucer, the story of *Troilus and Cressida* is followed by *The Testament of Creseide*, a conclusion of the tale by another writer, supposed to be one Robert Henderson, a school-master of Dunfermline. In this continuation, Creseide, for railing upon Venus and Cupid, is by the gods transformed into a leper ; and ends her life in great poverty and misery. The idea is coarse and unpoetical but it is not unskillfully treated, when we consider the rudeness of our language at that period.

H. T.



MR. A. YOUNGE AS STEPHANO,
AND
MR. H. NYE AS TRINCULO.

STE: Trinculo, if you trouble him any more in his tale, by this hand, I will supplant some of your teeth.

TRIN: Why, I said nothing.

TEMPEST.

Act 3, Sc. 2.

Engraved by G. Greatbath, from a Daguerrotype by Mayall.

The Tempest.

The storm which vanish'd on the neighb'ring shore,
Was taught by Shakspeare's *Tempest* first to roar.

DRYDEN.

WHEN the friends and fellow-players of Shakspeare, a few years after his untimely death, collected his works into a folio volume, they commenced with the romantic drama of the *Tempest*. The reasons which guided them in this arrangement are unknown; but, unless we imagine they followed no particular order, printing the dramas somewhat capriciously after they had once determined on the three grand divisions of Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies,—we may perhaps conclude the *Tempest* occupies its prominent position from a superior degree of royal favour bestowed upon it, for it is well known to have been acted before the Court, and its peculiar construction would have adapted it to the scenic contrivances of the masques which were produced so elaborately during the reign of the first James and his successor.

Internal evidence, as far as can be judged from the imperfect history of Shakspeare's genius, would lead to the conclusion that the *Tempest* is one of his late works, or at least written at a somewhat advanced period of life. The external evidence may be stated in a very few words. It appears from the original account-book still preserved at the Audit Office, Somerset House, that it was performed before James I. at Whitehall on the first of November, 1611:—"Hallomas nyght was presented att Whithall before the Kinges Ma^{tie} a play called the *Tempest*." A marginal note informs us that it was acted "by the King's players." This is the earliest notice of the play that has yet been discovered, but it proves nothing beyond that it was in existence at that time, the entry of its performance in no way distinguishing it as a new production. It was also played with success at the Blackfriars' Theatre,* and it was again performed at Court early in the year 1613, before Prince Charles, the Lady Elizabeth, and the Prince Palatine Elector, as appears from the MS. accounts of Lord Harrington, Treasurer of the Chamber to James I., preserved in the Bodleian Library.

This species of negative evidence is extremely valuable, saving us the necessity of producing serious argument to controvert the specious reasoning of Chalmers, and others, who would prove that Shakspeare had a real storm in his mind when he wrote the play, and that a great tempest in England in 1612 occasioned the selection of the title. Malone, a far more able critic than Chalmers, was yet prejudiced in favour of the received idea that an actual event was referred to, and wrote a pamphlet to show that the storm which dispersed the fleet of Sir George Somers and Sir Thomas Gates in July, 1609, on their passage with a large supply of provisions and men for the infant colony in Virginia, suggested this ethereal drama; and this opinion, solely grounded on a few trifling

* This interesting fact is obtained from Dryden's preface to the *Tempest*, 1670. It has escaped the notice of Knight and Collier.

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similarities which the accounts of any two shipwrecks might possess, is re-echoed by so recent a writer as Mr. Collier. But even the notice of "the still-vexed Bermoothes," which of itself renders it quite certain that the Bermudas never suggested the scene of the play,* might have been derived from many an earlier authority than Jourdain, who wrote an account of Somers' shipwreck published in 1610. Chalmers and Hunter insist upon it that the information was derived from Raleigh's Discoverie of Guiana, 1596; but surely, in an age when maritime adventures of every description were so popularly interesting and so universally read, there can be no necessity for fixing on a particular book, for many others can be found which mention the Bermudas as being surrounded by stormy seas, and inhabited with spirits. Jourdain's account is entitled, "A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Isle of Devils," and he says that the "islands of the Bermudas, as every man knoweth that hath heard or read of them, were never inhabited by any Christian or heathen people, but ever esteemed and reputed a most prodigious and enchanted place, affording nothing but gusts, storms, and foul weather; which made every navigator and mariner to avoid them as Scylla and Charybdis, or as they would shun the devil himself." Jourdain does not write as if this were a piece of recondite information, only to be met with in one other work.

The British Museum contains a relic of Shakspeare, the only book with his autograph known to exist, at least the only one of established authenticity, which must ever be quoted in any enquiry relating to the date of the *Tempest*. This precious volume is a copy of Florio's translation of Montaigne's Essays, fol. 1603, and the poet's autograph is written on the fly-leaf opposite the title in clear bold characters. We have indubitable proof that this work was read by Shakspeare, for there is contained, at p. 102, Gonzalo's scheme for government in nearly the same words used in the play:—"It is a nation, would I answer Plato, that hath no kinde of traffike, no knowledge of letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politike superioritie; no use of service, of riches, or of poverty; no contracts, no successions, no dividences, no occupation, but idle; no respect of kindred, but common; no apparell, but naturall; no manuring of lands; no use of wine, corne, or mettle. The very words that import lying, falshood, treason, dissimulation, covetousnes, envie, detraction and pardon, were never heard amongst them." This is undoubtedly more than accidental similarity. Shakspeare having done little more than rewrite the passage in verse: and we may, therefore, conclude with great safety that the play was written in or after 1603, the year this work was published. One critic, and one critic only, without attempting to deny the source of Gonzalo's speech, anxious to establish an early date for the *Tempest*, says that Florio's work *might* have been seen by Shakspeare in manuscript. But to reason on mere possibilities of this kind without evidence would render most literary discussions nugatory, and facts like the above are too rare with reference to Shakspeare's dramas to be dismissed without the strongest reasons.

Ben Jonson, in the Prologue to *Every Man in His Humour*, acted in 1598, ridicules the old plays of the sixteenth century in a passage which has been supposed to aim at the *Tempest*,—

He rather prays you will be pleas'd to see
One such to-day, as other plays should be;
Where neither chorus wafts you o'er the seas,
Nor creaking throne comes down the boys to please.
Nor nimble squib is seen to make afeard
The gentlewomen; nor roll'd bullet heard
To say, it thunders; nor tempestuous drum
Rumbles to tell you when the storm doth come.

But the allusions are not sufficiently minute to mark one particular play, and that only. Even the descent of a throne, the most marked indication, is found in another† drama. "Rare Ben," however,

* This mistake has been, however, committed by two or three critics, and I am told it would now be worse than heresy in the Bermudas to doubt that they were not the scene of the play. But the only notice of these islands in the drama is when Ariel tells Prospero he once called him up at midnight to fetch dew "from the still-vexed Bermoothes;" and the enchanted island, therefore, could not possibly have been the same locality.

† This fact, unknown to Mr. Knight, is derived from Lovelace's *Lucasta*.

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has something more definite in his *Bartholomew Fair*, 1614:—"If there be never a *servant-monster* i' the fair, who can help it, he says, nor a nest of antics? He is loth to make Nature afraid in his plays, like those that beget Tales, Tempests, and such like drolleries." We can scarcely doubt that Caliban is intended by the servant-monster, the title by which he is addressed by Stephano in Shakspeare's play; and the whole passage is strikingly applicable to the *Tempest*, if we suppose it to be jocularly alluded to by Jonson, not necessarily with an ill feeling, as assumed by the commentators. At the same time, while expressing this belief, it must be recollected there were no doubt drolleries or puppet-shows exhibited in Jonson's time at Bartholomew Fair of the kind here indicated. In connexion with this subject, I may mention that a curious early original bill describing a "new droll, called the *Tempest*," is preserved in the British Museum, and as it has never been noticed by any of the critics, a copy of it will probably not be unacceptable to the reader:—

Never acted before. At Miller's Booth, over against the Cross-daggers near the Crown Tavern, during the time of Bartholomew Fair, will be presented an excellent new droll, call'd *The Tempest, or the Distressed Lovers*, with the English hero, and the Island Princess, with the comical humours of the enchanted Scotchman, or Jockey and the three witches: Shewing how a nobleman of England was cast away upon the Indian shore, and in his travel found the princess of the country, with whom he fell in love, and after many dangers and perils, was married to her: and his faithful Scotchman, who was saved with him, travelling thorow woods, fell in among witches, where between 'em is abundance of comical diversion. There in the *Tempest* is Neptune, with his tritons, in his chariot drawn with sea-horses, and mermaids singing. With variety of entertainments performed by the best masters: the particulars would be too tedious to be inserted here.

Still more uncertain, as a criterion for establishing a date, must be considered the notice of the "dead Indian" in act ii., sc. 2, for although Shakspeare alludes most probably to some celebrated exhibition of the day, yet as far as our research enables us to judge, there were several shows to which his slight notice might possibly apply. I am induced to quote here at considerable length a remarkable account of the sights of England in the year 1609, written by Henry Peacham, not only because it is an interesting piece and unnoticed by all editors (even by Gifford, who would have found much in it to illustrate Jonson), but also as possibly containing a notice of the exhibition to which Shakspeare alludes:—

Why doe the rude vulgar so hastily post in a madnesse,
To gaze at trifles and toyes not worthy the viewing,
And thinke them happy; when may be shew'd for a penny
The Fleet-streete Mandrakes, that heavenly Motion of Eltham
Westminster monuments, and Guild-hall huge Corinæus,
That horne of Windsor (of an Unicorne very likely)
The cave of *Merlin*, the skirts of old *Tom* a Lincolne;
King *Johns* sword at Linne, with the cup the fraternity drinke in,
The Tombe of *Beauchampe*, and sword of Sir *Guy* a Warwicke:
The great long Dutchman, and roaring Marget a Barwicke
The *Mummied Princes*, and Cæsar's wine yet i' Dover,
Saint *James* his Ginney Hens, the Cassawarway moreover,
The Beaver i' the Parke (strange beast as er'e any man saw)
Downe-shearing willowes with teeth as sharpe as a hand saw
The Lance of *John* a *Gaunt*, and *Brandons* still i' the Tower
The fall of Ninive, with Norwich built in an hower.
King *Henries* slip shoes, the sword of valiant *Edward*;
The Coventry Boares-shield, and fire-works seen but to bedward.
Drakes ship at Detford, King *Richards* bed-sted i' Leyster,
The White Hall whale-bones, the silver Bason i' Chester;
The live-caught Dog-fish, the Wolfe and *Harry* the Lyon,
Hunks of the Beare-garden, to be feared, if he be nigh on

In the time of Shakspeare, the knowledge of distant countries and their history was but in its infancy; so that a "mummied prince" might be, or pass for, a "dead Indian" with the sight-seers. At all events, the conjecture is more probable (this is not saying much) than any produced by the commentators. From the records of Lewes, co. Sussex, it appears that a company of vagrant showmen exhibited something of the kind in that town in 1694, but whether dead or alive, is

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not stated. "Expenses in playing the Indian twice, and in cleansing the rome whear hee stands, in all 3s. 6d."

The notice of the "strange fish" is still more vague. Scarcely a year passed without something of the kind being exhibited, and the satire is therefore too general to be reduced to any particular application. In 1568 appeared, "A most true and marveilous straunge wonder, the lyke hath seldom been seene, of seventeen monstrous fisses taken in Suffolke at Downam Brydge;" and on the Registers of the Stationers' Company, for 1595, is entered an account of "a strange and hughe fishe dryven on the sandes at Outhorne in Holderness in Februarye." Wolfe, also, in 1586, printed a broadside containing an account of a monster fish found in the heart of a horse! The custom of exhibiting strange fishes was afterwards ridiculed by Maine, in his comedy of the *City Match*, ed. 1639, p. 23; and many other allusions to the practice could no doubt be collected. We do not attempt, then, to draw any conclusions from such notices, and at present must be contented with the certainty that the *Tempest* was written between the years 1603 and 1611, probably at a period inclining towards the former date.

No one has yet discovered the romance on which the *Tempest* was founded, although that such a tale exists either in Italian or Spanish can scarcely be doubted. Warton was informed by Collins that it was to be found in an Italian novel, and a similar intimation was made to Boswell, but the name of the work cannot now be ascertained. In the absence of this evidence, Malone has advanced the pretensions of the sixth tragical tale of Turberville, and Greene's comedy of Alphonsus, king of Arragon, as having suggested part of the plot; but the similarities he has pointed out are extremely slender and trivial. I have scarcely any doubt, if, by any fortunate accident, the novel mentioned by Collins should ever be recovered, we should discover in it most of the broad circumstances of the plot of the *Tempest*, and find that the poet has etherealized an ancient necromantic story. Prospero is a far more virtuous magician than any we read of elsewhere; and Ariel, in the original tale, more likely resembled Mephistophilus than the delicate spirit represented in the play. As, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakspeare has made our pretty national fairy mythology more fanciful and more poetical, so in the *Tempest* he has clothed necromancy with the robes of virtue,* and made us reverence a magician.

A German drama by Ayrrer, published in 1618, entitled the *Beautiful Sidea*,—Sidea corresponding to Shakspeare's Miranda—is founded on a tale containing striking similarities to the *Tempest*; but we cannot agree with Mr. Thoms, who introduced this subject to English readers, in considering it a version of an earlier drama on which Shakspeare founded his play. It is a well ascertained fact that English actors performed in Germany in Shakspeare's time, and it is not unlikely Ayrrer thus borrowed in some measure from the plays they performed.† In addition to this German production, an English ballad, called the *Enchanted Island*, has also been brought forward as a claimant for the honour of contributing to the tale of the *Tempest*; but it is now generally acknowledged to be a later production, and founded on the play. In this ballad, the names and localities are changed, and the verbal similarities to Shakspeare are very few. Miranda's smile is transferred from the sea to the island,—

When landed on th' Enchanted Isle
His little Ida's morning smile
Made him forget his woe;
And thus, within a cavern drear,
They lived for many a year i-fere
For Heaven had will'd it so.

* It is for this reason we find old treatises on necromancy and magic afford fewer illustrations of this play than might otherwise have been expected.

† Shakspeare was very little known in Germany in the seventeenth century, except in this way; and Eschenburg quotes the earliest notice of him in that country from a book printed in 1682, and the second from Benthem, who, however, merely copies an earlier English writer.

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Geraldo, the Prospero of the ballad, burns his book, breaks his "magic wand," and forswears the art of magic :—

From that day forth the isle has been
By wandering sailors never seen—
Some say 'tis buried deep
Beneath the sea, which breaks and roars
Above its savage rocky shores,
Nor ere is known to sleep.

This account of the fate of Prospero's island is not unpoetical, and may safely be accepted by the readers of Shakspeare. Mr. Hunter, however, tells a very different story. He says that if you take a map, (reading the *Tempest* with a map!) and, tracing the line of Alonso's track, speculate on the island on which Prospero and Miranda may be supposed to have been cast, you will soon be persuaded that island was Lampedusa. Mr. Hunter pursues the argument through many pages, but our space will not permit an extract, and the reader will not require one; for he who reads the *Tempest* in a congenial spirit will scarcely be willing to have his imagination fettered by realities. Lampedusa may very possibly have been the scene of the original novel, but the management of Shakspeare's drama leads us to believe the author himself intended an undefined vagueness inconsistent with the introduction of any particular island.

Soon after the restoration, Dryden produced an alteration of the *Tempest*, in which he introduced a man who had never seen a woman, as a contrast to Miranda, who had never seen a man, and furnished Caliban with a sister-monster. He acknowledges to have received the assistance of Davenant in this work, which was extremely successful; but the purity of the original is entirely lost, and the simple but noble-minded Miranda is converted into a character using language which borders on indelicacy.

Like the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, with which it has been classed, the *Tempest* is one of those romantic dramas which defy analytical criticism, and would lose in effect by being subjected to a rigid examination of realities. Although the unities are preserved, perhaps accidentally, not by design, no play owes less allegiance to the exact sciences; and the interest is not weakened by trivial incongruities in the author's conduct of time and space. A hag-born monster, a young lady educated by a magician prince in a desolate island, and an attendant spirit, capable of the assumption of any form, who not only treads the ooze of the salt deep, runs on the sharp wind of the North, works in the frosted earth, and rides on the curled clouds, but in his lighter moods, rides on the bat's back or reposes in a cowslip's-bell, are singular materials for a drama, the simplicity of whose construction exhibits in strong outline the boundless skill by which it is made so irresistibly attractive. It required the genius of Shakspeare to reconcile these apparently discordant elements, and construct out of them an harmonious structure. If, however, the reader imagines a defect exists, and agreeing with some critics in the opinion that Ariel was not an "ethereal featureless angel," observes an inconsistency in the development of his character, let us entreat him to merge it into the romantic conduct of the plot, and regard the whole drama as a purely imaginative construction formed on the idea of retributive justice, to which no one but Shakspeare has made necromancy subservient, without in some degree injuring the cause of virtue.

J. O. H.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona.

THE *Diana* of Jorge de Montemayor was one of the books which had the rare merit of escaping the flames that consumed the greater portion of the library of Don Quixote. "I am of opinion we ought not to burn it, but only take out that part of it which treats of the magician Felicia and the enchanted water, as also all the longer poems, and let the work escape with its prose, and the honour of being the first in that kind." The *Diana* deserved the praise of Cervantes, and it appears to have been extremely popular in England during the later years of the sixteenth century. It was translated by Bartholomew Yonge somewhere about 1582 or 1583, by Thomas Wilson in 1595 or 1596, and parts of it were rendered into English by Edward Paston and the celebrated Sir Philip Sidney;* but Yonge's version was the only one published, and that did not appear till 1598, the year in which we first hear of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* in the pages of Meres.

The fact of the popularity of the *Diana*, in England, at this period, is of considerable importance; for although it would seem that Shakspeare could not have read the printed translation by Yonge before he composed the play, there are similarities between a story contained in Montemayor and the drama too minute to be accidental. Mr. Collier says the incident common to the two is only such as might be found in other romances, and limits the resemblance to the assumption of male attire by the lady. But the most striking similitude is contained in the account of the incident of bringing the letter, and the waywardness of Julia; and I subjoin an extract from the *Diana*, which will exhibit even several of Shakspeare's own expressions, and prove that Mr. Collier's opinion is quite untenable:—

"When he had, therefore, by sundry signs, as by tilts and tourneys, and by prancing up and down upon his proud genet before my windows, made it manifest that he was in love with me, for at the first I did not so well perceive it, he determined in the end to write a letter unto me; and having practised divers times before with a maid of mine, and at length, with many gifts and fair promises, gotten her good will and furtherance, he gave her the letter to deliver to me. But to see the means that Rosina made unto me, for so was she called, the dutiful services and unwonted circumstances before she did deliver it, the oaths that she sware unto me, and the subtle words and serious protestations she used, it was a pleasant thing, and worthy the noting. To whom, nevertheless, with an angry countenance I turned again, saying, if I had not regard of mine own estate, and what hereafter might be said, I would make this shameless face of thine be known ever after for a mark of an impudent and bold minion; but because it is the first time, let this suffice that I have said, and give thee warning to take heed of the second.

"Methinks I see now the crafty wench, how she held her peace, dissembling very cunningly the sorrow that she conceived by my angry answer, for she feigned a counterfeit smiling, saying, Jesus! mistress, I gave it you, because you might laugh at it, and not to move your patience with it in this sort; for if I had any thought that it would have provoked you to anger, I pray God he may show his wrath as great towards me as ever he did to the daughter of any mother. And with this she added many words more, as she could do well enough, to pacify the feigned anger and ill opinion that I had conceived of her, and taking her letter with her, she departed from me. This having passed thus, I began to imagine what might ensue thereof, and love, methought, did put a certain desire into my mind to see the letter, though modesty and shame forbade me to ask it of my maid, especially for the words that had passed between us, as you have heard. And so I continued all that day until night in varietie of many thoughts; but when Rosina came to help me to bed, God knows how desirous I was to have

* This fact, hitherto unnoticed, is obtained from the later editions of the *Arcadia*.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

her entreat me again to take the letter, but she would never speak unto me about it, nor (as it seemed) did so much as once think thereof. Yet to try if by giving her some occasion I might prevail, I said unto her: And is it so, Rosina, that Don Felix, without any regard to mine honour, dares write unto me? These are things, mistress, said she demurely to me again, that are commonly incident to love; wherefore I beseech you pardon me, for if I had thought to have angered you with it, I would have first pulled out the balls of mine eyes. How cold my heart was at that blow, God knows, yet did I dissemble the matter, and suffer myself to remain that night only with my desire, and with occasion of little sleep. And so it was, indeed, for that, methought, was the longest and most painful night that ever I passed. But when, with a slower pace than I desired, the wished day was come, the discreet and subtle Rosina came into my chamber to help me to make me ready, in doing whereof of purpose she let the letter closely (*secretly*) fall, which, when I perceived,—What is that fell down? said I, let me see it. It is nothing, mistress, said she. Come, come, let me see it, said I. What! move me not, or else tell me what it is. Good Lord, mistress, said she, why will you see it: it is the letter I would have given you yesterday. Nay, that it is not, said I: wherefore show it me, that I may see if you lie or no. I had no sooner said so, but she put it into my hands, saying, God never give me good if it be any other thing; and although I knew it well indeed, yet I said, What? this is not the same, for I know that well enough, but it is one of thy lover's letters: I will read it, to see in what need he standeth of thy favour."

It is by no means impossible that the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, as we now possess it, has received additions from its author's hands, to what was perhaps originally a very meagre production. This conjecture would well agree with what we know to have been the dramatic usage of the time; and it seems difficult to account, on any other supposition, for the use Shakspeare has made of the tale of *Felismena*. The absolute origin of the entire plot has possibly to be discovered in some Italian novel.* The error in the first folio, of "Padua" for Milan, in Act ii. Sc. 5, has perhaps to be referred to some scene in the original novel. Tieck mentions an old German play founded on a tale similar to the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; but it has not yet been made accessible to English students, and we have no means of ascertaining how far the resemblance extends.

Should the original novel, supposing one to exist, ever be discovered, it will probably be found to assimilate more to the ancient tales of perfect friendship than might be suspected from Shakspeare's play. In venturing upon this conjecture, I have been guided, in a great measure, by the romantic generosity of Valentine in the last act, which scarcely looks like a free result of the poet's own invention. It is quite true he might have found similar instances in several old friendship tales, but it seems more natural to suppose he transferred it from the same source to which we are indebted for the play, than that the incident was introduced from another copy. That any editor can have a doubt as to Shakspeare's intention to represent Valentine's generosity so great, that, in the excess of his rapture for the repentance of Proteus, he gives up to him all his right in Silvia, would be improbable, had we not two late instances of attempts to explain the scene in a different manner; but any interpretation which destroys the literal meaning of Valentine's gift,—

And that my love may appear plain and free,
All that was mine in Silvia I give thee,

renders Julia's exclamation,—“O me unhappy!”—which immediately follows, entirely unmeaning. Mr. Collier thinks Valentine suspected Silvia's purity from her position with Proteus in the forest, and is therefore giving his friend a present no longer desirable to himself! It would be difficult to imagine a supposition that would more completely destroy the poetry and romance of Valentine's character.

The commentators have brought much curious learning to illustrate the question of the date at which this play was written; but their arguments are for the most part founded on vague generalities, such as notices of foreign adventure and classical allusions, not by any means sufficiently minute to enable us to conclude any particular circumstances were intended by the author. Meres, in his *Wits Treasury*, 1598, says, “Shakspeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for comedy, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, &c.” This is the earliest notice of the play

* A similarity which has been pointed out between the incident of Valentine turning captain of the outlaws and a story in the *Arcadia* is of the slightest kind; but there is in that work an encomium on solitude which may be compared with Valentine's soliloquy in Act. v. Sc. 4.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

that has come down to us; but most critics believe it to have been written several years before the publication of the *Wits Treasury*, and Mr. Hudson (Lectures on Shakspeare, i. 220) appears to consider it the poet's earliest dramatic work.

Although probably not quite the "first heir" of Shakspeare's dramatic invention, the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* exhibits a deficiency of effective situation, and to some extent a crudity of construction, which would most likely have been avoided by a practised writer for the stage. But these defects are unnoticed by the reader in the richness of its poetical beauties and overflowing humour,—its romance and pathos. The tale is based on love and friendship. Valentine is the ideal personification of both, of pure love to Silvia, and romantic attachment to the friend of his youth. Proteus, on the contrary, selfish and sensual, suffers himself to be guided by his passions, and concludes his inconstancy to his love with perfidious treachery to his friend. Valentine, noble and brave, but timid before the mistress of his affections, adoring Silvia's glove, and too diffident even to interpret her stratagem of the letter: Proteus, daring all, and losing his integrity, in the excess of a tumultuous passion. If Shakspeare has painted these elements in an outline something too bold for the extreme refinement of the present day, the error must be ascribed to his era, not to himself; and if it be also objected to this play, that the female characters are germs only of more powerful creations in *Twelfth Night* or *Cymbeline*, the reader must bear in mind they are perhaps more suitable to the extreme simplicity of the story, that the chief object of the dramatist is directed to the development of the characters of Valentine and Proteus, and, above all, that the play should be judged by itself. There are few, indeed, who would be willing to miss the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, for it is, nevertheless, a gem, though it may not shine quite as brilliantly as some others in the Shakspeareian cabinet.

J. O. H.



MRS WINSTANLEY AS MRS QUICKLY.

Mrs Q. Lord, Lord ! your worships a wanton ! Well,
heaven forgive you, and all of us, I pray !

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Act 2, Sc 2.

Engraved by Hollis from a Daguerreotype by Mayall.

JOHN TALLIS & COMPANY, LONDON & NEW YORK.

The Merry Wives of Windsor.

EARLY in the last century, eighty-six years after the death of Shakspeare, an unsuccessful comedy was produced at Drury Lane Theatre, under the title of *The Comical Gallant*. This play was heralded forth in the bills of the day as the work of Mr. John Dennis, but it was merely an alteration of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and a very poor attempt at an improvement of that admirable comedy. The *dramatis personæ* are much the same as in the *Merry Wives*, except that Dennis had added one new character, the Host of the Bull, who is brother to Mrs. Ford; and Fenton is represented as her nephew. Dennis has rewritten about half the dialogue, and materially changed the conduct of the piece. He was, however, sufficiently well satisfied with its merits to undertake the expense of printing; and it was accordingly published in the year 1702, with a long dedicatory epistle, from which I make the following extract, putting in italics those portions to which I more particularly wish to direct the reader's attention:—

“When I first communicated the design which I had of altering this comedy of Shakspeare, I found that I should have two sorts of people to deal with, who would equally endeavour to obstruct my success. The one believed it to be so admirable, that nothing ought to be added to it; the others fancied it to be so despicable, that any one's time would be lost upon it. That this comedy was not despicable, I guess'd for several reasons; First, *I knew very well that it had pleas'd one of the greatest queens that ever was in the world*, great not only for her wisdom in the arts of government, but for her knowledge of polite learning, and her nice taste of the drama, for such a taste we may be sure she had, by the relish which she had of the ancients. *This comedy was written at her command, and by her direction, and she was so eager to see it acted, that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days; and was afterwards, as tradition tells us, very well pleas'd at the representation.* In the second place, in the reign of King Charles the Second, when people had an admirable taste of comedy, all those men of extraordinary parts, who were the ornaments of that court, as the late Duke of Buckingham, my Lord Normandy, my late lord Rochester, Sir Charles Sidley, Dr. Frazer, Mr. Savil, Mr. Buckley, were in love with the beauties of this comedy. In the third place, I thought that after so long an acquaintance as I had with the best comic poets, among the ancients and moderns, I might depend in some measure upon my own judgment, and I thought I found here three or four extraordinary characters, that were exactly drawn, and truly comical; and that I saw besides in it some as happy touches as ever were in comedy. Besides I had observed what success the character of Falstaff had had in the First Part of *Harry the Fourth*. And as the Falstaff in the *Merry Wives* is certainly superior to that of the Second Part of *Harry the Fourth*, so it can hardly be said to be inferior to that of the first.”

This is the earliest notice we possess of the above curious tradition, and that Dennis has reported it correctly seems to admit of little doubt. The reader will observe he gives no special reason *why* the Queen commanded the poet to write the comedy, and I suspect it is this point that the subsequent narrators of the tradition have amplified without proper authority. Dennis, in the prologue to his play, again refers to the short space of time in which the *Merry Wives* was written:—

“But Shakspeare's play in fourteen days was writ,
And in that space to make all just and fit,
Was an attempt surpassing human wit.
Yet our great Shakspeare's matchless muse was such,
None ere in so small a time perform'd so much.”

Rowe, in 1709, gives a somewhat more circumstantial account. Speaking of Queen Elizabeth, he says, “She was so well pleased with that admirable character of Falstaff in the two parts of *Henry IV.*,

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that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love; this is said to be the occasion of his writing the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. How well she was obeyed, the play itself is an admirable proof." This evidence is followed by Gildon's account of the same tradition,* who, in 1710, jumbled an allusion to the amended play with an anecdote that properly belongs exclusively to the sketch, in the following words:—"The fairies in the fifth act make a handsome compliment to the Queen, in her palace of Windsor, who had obliged him to write a play of Sir John Falstaff in love, and which *I am very well assured* he performed in a fortnight; a prodigious thing, when all is so well contrived, and carried on without the least confusion." It will be perceived that, although Gildon is in fact still less precise than Rowe, yet Elizabeth could not very well have commanded Shakspeare to exhibit the celebrated fat knight in love, if she had not been previously introduced to him in another character. Pope, Theobald, and later editors, appear to have taken their versions of the tradition second-hand from Rowe.

The reader will probably be pleased with having the opportunity of consulting the evidence here collected on this interesting subject, for much of the criticism on the external history of Shakspeare's comedy depends upon the degree of credit we may be disposed to give to it. It seems unreasonable, in face of these authorities, to refuse the belief that the first sketch of the play was written at the request of Queen Elizabeth, and in a very brief space of time; although it is not improbable that Rowe may have guessed at the *reason* of the royal command, and given us his gratuitous explanation of the imperfect anecdote related by Dennis. Nothing can be more likely than this supposition; and, to say the least, it would be very unsafe to take Rowe's narrative for granted, and reason upon it in the way in which Malone does. I would rather attempt to explain the tradition, analyze its various parts, and ascertain how far these are in accordance with the internal evidences in the plays in which Falstaff and his companions are introduced, than build a theory upon it. It is on this account I am induced to hazard a conjecture which will satisfy all the authenticated parts of the tradition, by supposing *another reason* for the play having been produced before the court at a very short notice.

If we enquire what could have led our great dramatist to select Windsor for the scene of the love adventures of Falstaff, believing the tradition that the play was written by command of the Queen, does it appear an improbable conjecture to suppose that Elizabeth may have resided at Windsor at the time, and that either he was induced to select the scene under the impression that his comedy might be more favourably received from its local associations, or that her majesty may have commanded the lord chamberlain's servants to exhibit a new play, the scene of which should be laid in the place where she was then holding her court? The comedy was first published in 1602, but that edition contains merely the author's original sketch. The amended play, as we now have it, and as it is presented to the reader in the following pages, appeared in the first folio in 1623. The title-page of the former tells us that the play "hath been divers times acted by the Right Honourable my Lord Chamberlain's servants, both *before Her Majesty* and elsewhere." The Queen, it is well known, had plays and masques exhibited before her at Windsor Castle; and it appears to me that the following incident, which is introduced both in the sketch and in the amended play, is almost sufficient of itself to show that my conjecture of its provincial composition is correct:—

"*Doc.* Where be my Host de gartyre ?

Host. O here sir in perplexitie.

Doc. I cannot tell vad be dad,

But begar I will tell you van ting,

Dear be a Garmaine Duke come to de Court,

Has cosened all de host of Branford,

And Redding: begar I tell you for good will,

Ha, ha, mine Host, am I euen met you.

[*Exit.*

* When Mr. Knight says that Rowe adopted the more circumstantial tradition from Gildon he had probably forgotten that Rowe's account was published some time before Gildon's was written.

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Enter SIR HUGH.

"*Sir Hu.* Where is mine Host of the gartyr?
Now my Host, I would desire you looke you now,
To haue a care of your entertainments,
For there is three sorts of cosen garmombles,
Is cosen all the Host of Maidenhead & Readings,
Now you are an honest man, and a scuruy beggerly lowsie knaue beside:
And can point wrong places,
I tell you for good will, grate why mine Host." [Ed. 1602, 4to.]

We have a more particular account of the same incident in the amended play. See act iv. sc. 3, and sc. 5. The reader will please to compare the account in those scenes with the above; and if we agree with Mr. Knight, in considering the incident as one of those local and temporary allusions which Shakspeare seized upon to arrest the attention of his audience, we shall find it become of great importance in determining the date of the composition of the play. In 1592, a German duke did visit Windsor, and Mr. Knight was fortunate enough to meet with an account of his visit, printed at Tubingen, in 1602. It was the Duke of Würtemberg, who travelled under the name of the Count Mombeliard, accompanied by a considerable retinue. In the curious volume, which contains the history of the duke's progress, is printed a sort of passport from Lord Howard, addressed, as usual in such documents, to all justices of the peace, mayors, and bailiffs. Mr. Knight reprints it with the errors of the German transcriber; but the original paper was probably as nearly as possible in the following form:—

"Whereas this nobleman, Counte Mombeliard, is to passe over contrye in England, into the Lowe Contryes, thise shalbe to wil and command you, in hir Majestyes name (for suche is hir pleasure), to see him furnished with post horses in his travail to the sea syde, and there to seke up such shippinge as shalbe fit for his transportacions, *he payinge nothinge for the same.* For which this shalbe your sufficient warrante. So see that you faile not hereof, at your perills. From Biffeete, the 2 of Septembre, 1592 (34 Eliz.)

"Your friend,

"C. HOWARD."

It may perhaps be a question, whether the "cosen garmombles" of Sir Hugh Evans apply only to the count's retinue, or include himself; but, in either case, there appears to be little doubt that the passages which relate to the German duke have reference to the Duke of Würtemberg's visit to Windsor, in the year 1592,—a matter to be forgotten in 1601, when Malone says the sketch was written; and not likely to be so particularly alluded to in 1596, the date assigned to it by Chalmers. "His grace and suite," observes Mr. Knight, "must have caused a sensation at Windsor. Probably mine host of the Garter had really made 'grand preparation for a duke de Jarmany.' Was there any dispute about the ultimate payment for the duke's horses, which *he* was authorised to have free of expense? Did our host know of this privilege, when he said, 'they shall have my horses, but I'll make them pay?'" The count himself would probably not have sanctioned a "cousenage" of this kind, but his attendants would little scruple in availing themselves of the general privilege given to their master by the English government. On the whole we may conclude, with much safety, that the *Merry Wives* was composed in the year 1592, or very soon afterwards, and perhaps first acted in 1593, in the January of which year Queen Elizabeth had a series of masques and plays performed before her at Windsor Castle.

Regarding the chronology of the play as settled, a question arises, in what point of view the comedy must be considered in connection with the historical plays which possess several of the same characters. A great variety of opinions have been expressed on this subject, and the reader who desires to pursue the argument will find it fully discussed in the preface to an edition of the first sketch of the play which I edited for the Shakspeare Society, in 1842, and from which most of the preceding observations have been taken. The analysis of the characters I have there attempted is too diffuse for our limited space; but it may be briefly stated that, after a very minute examination of the subject, I arrived at the conclusion that the two parts of *Henry IV.*, like the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, originally existed in an unfinished state, and that when the first sketch of the latter was written, those plays had not been altered and

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amended in the form in which they have come down to us. The Falstaff of the two parts of *Henry IV.* was originally termed Oldcastle; and if we associate this circumstance with the tradition recorded by Dennis, it will not be very difficult to suggest the great probability that there was a circumstance in the poet's literary history, the exact nature of which will most likely never be revealed, but which would probably fulfil all the conditions of this, the most perplexing problem in Shakspeareian criticism.

Shakspeare's first sketch of the play was published in 1602, under the quaint title of, *A most pleasant and excellent conceited Comedie of Syr John Fulstaffe, and the Merrie Wives of Windsor: intermixed with sundrie variable and pleasing humors of Syr Hugh the Welch Knight, Justice Shallow, and his wise Cousin, M. Slender: with the swaggering vaine of Auncient Pistoll and Corporall Nym. By William Shakspeare. As it hath bene divers times acted by the right Honorable my Lord Chamberlaines servants, both before her Majestie, and elsewhere. London, Printed by T. C. for Arthur Johnson, and are to be sold at his shop in Powles Church-yard, at the signe of the Flower de Leuse and the Crowne, 1602.* This was reprinted in 1619, with a few immaterial additions, the blunders of the early copy being retained. It was most likely piratically published; but it is of great interest, because we find in it, though in an imperfect form, the draught of the great poet's more finished delineation. It is no slight advantage to be thus enabled to trace the progress of his genius; and our readers will not object to have an opportunity of comparing the two copies in the scene at Herne's oak, which, as Mr. Knight justly observes, has no doubt been completely re-written:—

QUARTO OF 1602.

Qui. You fairies that do haunt these shady groves,
Look round about the wood if you can espy
A mortal that doth haunt our sacred round:
If such a one you can espy, give him his due,
And leave not till you pinch him black and blue.
Give them their charge, Puck, ere they part away.

Sir Hugh. Come hither, Pean, go to the country houses,
And when you find a slut that lies asleep,
And all her dishes foul, and room unswept,
With your long nails pinch her till she cry
And swear to mend her sluttish housewifery.

Fai. I warrant you, I will perform your will.

Hu. Where is Pead? Go you and see where brokers sleep,
And fox-eyed serjeants, with their mace,
Go lay the proctors in the street,
And pinch the lousy serjeant's face:
Spare none of these when they are a-bed,
But such whose nose looks plue and red.

Qui. Away, begone, his mind fulfil,
And look that none of you stand still.
Some do that thing, some do this,
All do something, none amiss.

Sir Hugh. I smell a man of middle-earth,

Fal. God bless me from that Welsh fairy!

Quic. Look every one about this round,
And if that any here be found,
For his presumption in this place,
Spare neither leg, arm, head, nor face.

Sir Hugh. See I have spied one by good luck,
His body man, his head a buck.

Fal. God send me good fortune now, and I care not

Quick. Go straight, and do as I command,
And take a taper in your hand,
And set it to his fingers' ends,
And if you see it him offends,
And that he starteth at the flame,
Then is he mortal, know his name:
If with an F it doth begin,
Why then be sure he is full of sin

FOLIO OF 1623.

Quick. Fairies, black, grey, green, and white,
You moonshine-revellers, and shades of night,
You orphan heirs of fixed destiny,
Attend your office and your quality.
Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy oyes.

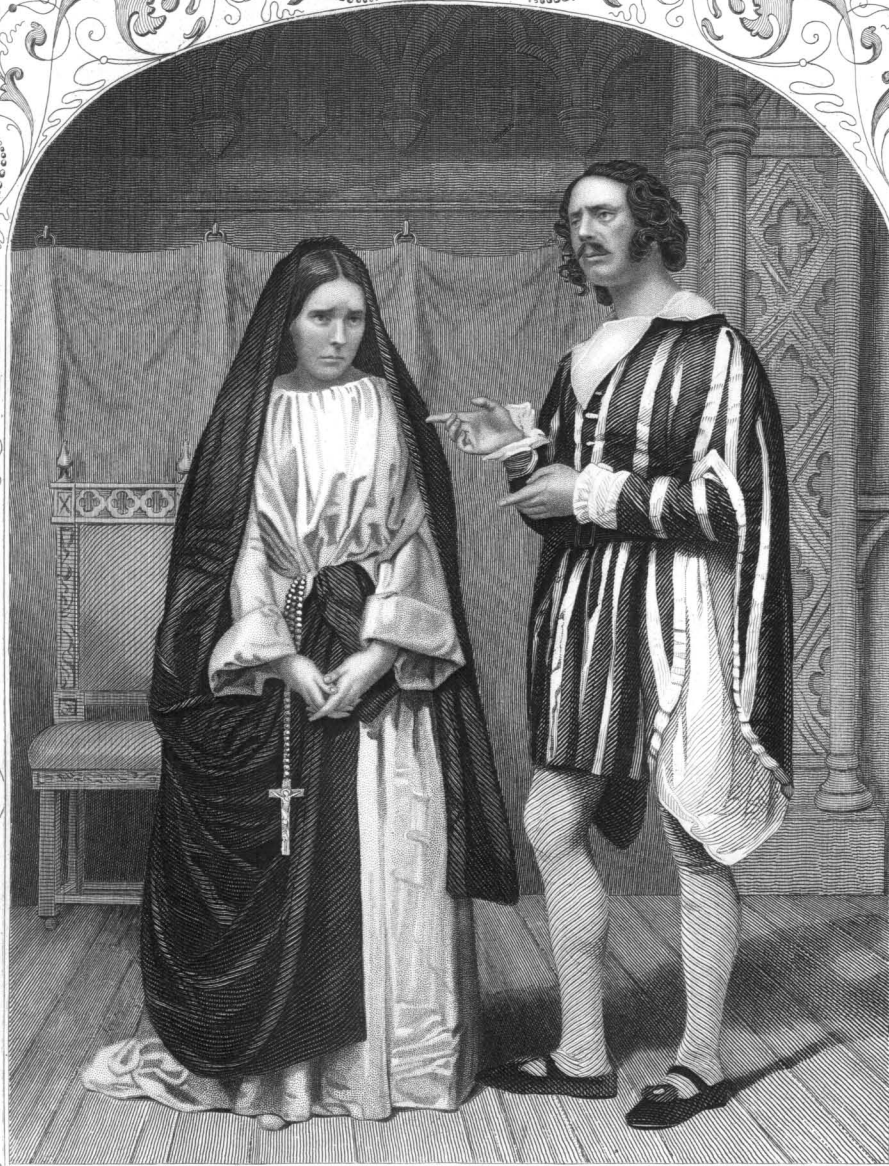
Pist. Elves, list your names; silence you airy toys.
Cricket, to Windsor chimnies shalt thou leap:
Where fires thou find'st unrak'd, and hearths unswept,
There pinch the maids as blue as bilberry:
Our radiant queen hates sluts and sluttery.

Fal. They are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die:
I 'll wink and couch: no man their works must eye.

[Lies down upon his face]

Eva. Where's Bead?—Go you, and where you find a maid,
That, ere she sleep, has thrice her prayers said,
Raise up the organs of her fantasy,
Sleep she as sound as careless infancy;
But those as sleep and think not on their sins,
Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides, and shins.

Quick. About, about;
Search Windsor-castle, elves, within and out:
Strew good luck, ouphes, on every sacred room;
That it may stand till the perpetual doom,
In state as wholesome, as in state 't is fit:
Worthy the owner, and the owner it.
The several chairs of order look you scour
With juice of balm, and every precious flow'r:
Each fair instalment, coat, and sev'ral crest,
With loyal blazon evermore be blest!
And nightly, meadow-fairies, look you sing,
Like to the Garter's compass in a ring:
Th' expressure that it bears green let it be,
More fertile-fresh than all the field to see;
And *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, write,
In em'roid tuffs, flow'rs purple, blue, and white:
Like sapphire, pearl, and rich embroidery,
Buckled below fair knight-hood's bending knee:
Fairies use flow'rs for their characterie.
Away; disperse: But, till 'tis one o'clock,



MISS GLYN AND MR HOSKINS,
AS
ISABELLA & LUCIO.

ISAB: My power! Alas, I doubt —
LUCIO: Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the
good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE. Act 1 Scene 5.

From a Daguerreotype by Paine of Solingtons.

Measure for Measure.

Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure;
Like doth quit like, and MEASURE STILL FOR MEASURE.

THE principal incident in this play, the infamous conduct of Angelo, has been related of a variety of persons in different ages; but the primary source of the plot adopted by Shakspeare is found in the novels of Cinthio, *Hecatommithi*, 1565, v. 8. In the novel of that writer, Juriste, governor of Inspruck, a man renowned for wisdom and justice, sentenced a youth named Lodovico to death for violation. Epitia, sister of Lodovico, a virgin of exquisite beauty and highly accomplished, deeply loved her brother, and determined to attempt his deliverance. Kneeling in tears before the feet of Juriste, and pleading her brother's cause with pathetic eloquence, her graceful beauty, rendered still more attractive by her position, enraptured the stern judge, who had previously laughed to scorn the power of love. In the success of tumultuous passion, he makes the same proposal to her which Angelo does to Isabella. It is rejected with indignation, but Epitia is not proof against the tears and entreaty of her brother, and reluctantly yields to the wishes of Juriste under the solemn promise of marriage. What was her agony, then, to find that his vows were forgotten, and that Lodovico was executed, notwithstanding the sacrifice she had made. She appeals to the emperor of the Romans, before whom Juriste is convicted, compelled to marry her, and then sentenced to death. Epitia now sues for her husband's life; forgets her wrongs in her character as a wife; and, having obtained her prayer, continues the faithful partner of Juriste, who, on his part, is supposed to be reformed by her unexampled virtue and generosity.

It may readily be supposed that a tale like this, though not well suited to a very refined age, would be likely to attract the attention of our early dramatists as containing the material for much effective situation. We accordingly find that as early as 1578, George Whetstone published a drama founded on Cinthio's tale, under the quaint title of, *The right excellent and famous Historye of Promos and Cassandra, divided into Commical Discourses: In the fyrste Parte is showne the unsufferable abuse of a lewde Magistrate, the vertuous behaviours of a chaste Ladye, the uncontrawled leawdeness of a favoured Curtisan, and the undeserved Estimation of a pernicious Parasyte: In the second Parte is discoursed the perfect Magnanimitye of a noble Kinge, in checking Vice and favouringe Vertue: Wherein is showne the Ruynie and Overthrowe of dishonest Practises, with the Advancement of upright Dealing.* The following argument prefixed to this play will enable the reader to discover how far Shakspeare has deviated from Whetstone's plot:—

In the Cytie of Julio (sometime under the dominion of Corvinus, King of Hungarie and Boemia) there was a law, that what man so ever committed Adultery, should lose his head, and the woman offender should weare some disguised apparell, during her life,

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

to make her infamously noted. This severe lawe, by the favour of some mercifull magistrate, became little regarded, untill the time of Lord Promos auctoritie: who, convicting a yong Gentleman named Andrugio of incontinency, condemned both him, and his minion, to the execution of this statute. Andrugio had a very vertuous and beautiful Gentlewoman to his Sister, named Cassandra: Cassandra, to enlarge her brothers life, submitted an humble petition to the Lord Promos: Promos regarding her good behaviours, and fantasying her great beawtie, was much delighted with the sweete order of her talke: and doying good, that evil might come thereof, for a time he reprieved her brother: but, wicked man, tounring his liking unto unlawfull lust, he set downe the spoile of her honour raunsome for her Brothers life: chaste Cassandra, abhorring both him and his sute, by no persuasion would yeald to this raunsome. But, in fine, wonne with the importunitie of her Brother (pleading for life), upon these conditions she agreede to Promos. First that he should pardon her brother, and after marry her. Promos as feareless in promise, as carelesse in performance, with sollemne vowe, sygnd her conditions: but worse then any Infydel, his will satisfied, he performed neither the one nor the other: for to keepe his auctoritie, unspotted with favour, and to prevent Cassandras clamors, he commaunded the Gayler secretly to present Cassandra with her brother's head. The Gayler, [touched] with the outeryes of Andrugio, abhorring Promos lewdenes, by the providence of God, provyded thus for his safety. He presented Cassandra with a felons head newlie executed, who (being mangled, knew it not from her brother's, by the Gaylor, who was set at libertie) was so agreede at this trecherye, that at the pointe to kyl herselfe, she spared that stroke to be avenged of Promos. And, devisyng a way, she concluded to make her fortunes knowne unto the kynge. She (executing this resolution) was so highly favoured of the king, that forthwith he hasted to do justice on Promos: whose judgment was, to marrye Cassandra, to repaire her crased honour: which donne, for his hainous offence he should lose his head. This marryage solemnised, Cassandra, tyed in the greatest bondes of affection to her husband, became an earnest suter for his life: the kinge (tendrings the generall benefit of the common weale, before her special case, although he favoured her much) would not graunt her sute. Andrugio (disguised amonge the company) sorrowing the grieve of his sister, bewrayde his safetye, and craved pardon. The kinge, to renouve the vertues of Cassandra, pardoned both him and Promos. The circumstances of this rare Historye, in action lyvelye foloweth.

Whetstone gave a prose version of the story in his *Heptameron*, 1582, in a marginal note to which he informs us that the play above-mentioned had not then been "presented upon the stage." The drama of *Promos and Cassandra* is unquestionably the immediate source of Shakspeare's play, the deviations of Whetstone from Cinthio's having been adopted by the great dramatist. The youth is not condemned for the greater crime, but for incontinency after solemn affiancing; and the culprit is saved from execution by the substitution of another head. Shakspeare's grand improvement is the introduction of Mariana, whose part in the scene so infinitely purifies the tale. Some of the minor portions of the bye-play in *Measure for Measure*, and those the most distasteful to modern ears, were suggested by scenes in *Promos and Cassandra*. I will give an extract from the latter play, the scene corresponding to the affecting interview between Isabella and Claudio, which will suffice to show the nature of the slender materials worked into beauty by the hand of Shakspeare:—

Andrugio My Cassandra what newes, good sister showe.

Cassandra All things conclude thy death, Andrugio;
Prepare thyselfe, to hope it ware in vaine.

Andrugio My death! alas, what raysted this new disdayne?

Cassandra Not Justice zeale in wicked Promos sure.

Andrugio Sweete, shew the cause I must this doome indure.

Cassandra If thou dost live, I must my honor lose.

Thy raunsome is, to Promos fleshly wyll

That I do yielde: than which I rather chose

With torments sharpe myselfe he first should kyll.

Thus am I bent: thou seest thy death at hand:

O would my life would satisfie his yre,

Cassandra then would cancell soone thy band!

Andrugio And may it be a judge of his account

Can spot his minde with lawles love or lust?

But more, may he doome any fault with death,

When in such faute he findes himselfe unjust?

Syster, that wise men love we often see,

And where love rules, gainst thornes doth reason spurne.

But who so loves, if he rejected be,

His passing love to peevish hate will turne.

Deare sister then note how my fortune stands:

That Promos love, the like is oft in use;

And sith he crave this kindnesse at your hands,

Think this, if you his pleasure do refuse,

I, in his rage (poor wretch) shall sing *Peccavi*.

Here are two evyls, the best harde to digest;

But whereas things are driven unto necessity,

There are we byd, of both evyls choose the leaest.

Cassandra And of these evils the least, I hold, is death

To shun whose dart we can no meane devise;

Yet honor lives when death hath done his worst;

Thus fame then lyfe is of farre more comprise.

Andrugio Nay, Cassandra, if thou thy selfe submit,

To save my life, to Promos fleashly wyll,

Justice wyll say thou dost no cryme commit,

For in forst faultes is no intent of yll.

Cassandra How so th' intent is construed in offence,

The Proverbe saies that tenne good turnes lye dead.

And one yll deede tenne tymes beyond pretence

By envious tongues, report abrode doth spread.

Andrugio, so my fame shall vallewde bee;

Dispite will blase my crime, but not the cause;

And thus, although I fayne would set thee free,

Poor wench, I feare the grype of slaunder's pawes.

Andrugio Nay sweete sister, more slaunder would infame

Your spotles lyfe to reave your brother's breath,

When you have power for to enlarge the same;

Once in your handes doth lye my life and death.

Way that I am the selfe-same flesh you are;

Thinke, I once gone, our house will goe to wrack:

Knowe, forced faultes for slaunder neede not care:

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

Looke you for blame, if I guaile through your lack.
 Consider well my great extremitie;
 If otherwise this doome I could revoke,
 I would not spare for any jebardye
 To free thee, wench, from this same heavy yoke:
 But ah, I see else no way saves my life,
 And yet his hope may further thy consent;
 He sayde, he maye percase make thee his wyfe,
 And 't is likelie he cannot be content
 With one night's joye: if love he after seekes;
 And I discharg'd, if thou aloofe then be,
 Before he lose thy selfe that so he leekes,
 No doubt but he to marryage wyll agree.

Cassandra. And shall I sticke to stoupe to Promos wyll,
 Since my brother injoyeth lyfe thereby?
 No, although it doth my credit kyll,
 Ere that he should, my selfe would chuse to dye.
 My Andrugio, take comfort in distresse,
 Cassandra is wonne thy raunsome great to paye;
 Such care she hath thy thraldome to releace
 As she consentes her honor for to slay.
 Farewell, I must my virgin's weedes forsake,
 And lyke a Page to Promos lewde repayre.

[*Exit.*]

Andrugio. My good sister, to God I thee betake,
 To whome I praye that comforte change thy care.

Mr. Skottowe has pointed out several similarities of sentiment in the old play and *Measure for Measure*. They are not, perhaps, extremely striking, but they show at all events the extent of the poet's obligations, which are about as great as those a sculptor owes to his block of marble. Mr. Collier considers that Shakspeare was not indebted to Whetstone for a single thought, nor for a casual expression, excepting as far as similarity of situation may be said to have necessarily occasioned corresponding states of feeling, and employment of language. But this opinion, is, I think, put somewhat too strongly.

We first hear of *Measure for Measure* as having been performed at court on December 26th, 1604. On the evening of that day, his Majesty's players acted it at Whitehall. The original account-book preserved at the Audit Office, Somerset House, edited by Mr. P. Cunningham, records that *Mr. Shawberd* (O for another essay on the orthography of Shakspeare!) was "the poet which mayd the plaie." The entry is as follows:—"On St. Stevens night in the hall a play caled Mesur for Mesur." It was first printed in the folio of 1623, but with many errors. In the preparation of our text, I have had the advantage of comparing a copy with curious early MS. notes in the library of E. R. Tunno, Esq., purchased by him at the sale of Mr. Dent's library, ii. 1270, for £65 2s. This valuable volume has supplied several important corrections, which have every appearance of genuineness. Sir W. Davenant, who wrote an alteration of the play entitled *Law against Lovers*, 1673, also made some useful emendations. The alterations, however, in our text are not numerous; and it will generally be found to be a faithful copy of the first edition.

In the year 1700, an alteration of this comedy by Charles Gildon was published, under the title of *Measure for Measure, or Beauty the best Advocate, as it is Acted at the Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields: written originally by Mr. Shakspear, and now very much alter'd, with additions of several entertainments of Musick*, 4to. This performance is of very questionable merit, and the author has unfortunately not recorded any traditions relating to the original drama that might have been then current. In the course of the prologue, he says:—

Let neither dance nor musick be forgot,
 Nor scenes, no matter for the sense or plot:
 Such things we own in Shakspear's days might do,
 But then his audience did not judge like you.

Malone was of opinion that in the speech of the Duke in Act i. Sc. 1,—

— I love the people,
 But do not like to stage me to their eyes:
 Though it do well, I do not relish well
 Their loud applause and *aves* vehement;
 Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
 That does affect it—

there is an allusion to the great dislike of James I. to popular applause. Knowing that the play was acted before that sovereign soon after his accession to the throne, it certainly is not impossible that an

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apology of this kind for a reserve which does not appear to have well pleased the English public, would have been highly relished by the king. It might have been one of those

— flights upon the river Thames,
That so did take Eliza and our James.

James had exhibited early in life a fondness for the "life removed." As early as the year 1586, he is thus described by a contemporary,—“Generally, he seemeth desirous of peace, as appeareth by his disposition and exercise; viz., his great delight in hunting, his private delight in enditing poesies, and in one or both of these commonly he spendeth the day, when he hath no public thing to do; his desire to withdraw himself from places of most access and company, to places of more solitude and repose, with very small retinue.” A similar taste pervaded his movements after he had ascended the throne of Great Britain. “In his publick appearance,” observes Wilson, “especially in his sports, the accesses of the people made him so impatient, that he often dispersed them with frowns, that we may not say with curses.” We have something still more definite in the account which Sir Simonds D’Ewes gives of the king’s conduct in his progress to Parliament in the year 1621,—“In the king’s short progress from Whitehall to Westminster, these passages following were accounted somewhat remarkable; First, that he spake often and lovingly to the people, standing thick and three-fold on all sides to behold him, ‘God bless ye! God bless ye!’ *contrary to his former hasty and passionate custom, which often in his sudden distemper would bid a plague on such as flocked to see him*: Secondly, that though the windows were filled with many great ladies as he rode along, yet that he spake to none of them but to the Marquis of Buckingham’s mother and wife, who was the sole daughter and heiress of the Earl of Rutland: Thirdly, that he spake particularly and bowed to the Count of Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador; and fourthly, that looking up to one window as he passed, full of gentlewomen or ladies in yellow bands, he cried out aloud, ‘A——take ye, are ye there?’ at which being much ashamed, they all withdrew themselves suddenly from the window.” This graphic account certainly confirms the possibility of Malone’s conjecture, which, however, it is scarcely necessary to observe, is not founded on evidence. If it be admitted, another passage may be produced which also tends to the same conclusion,—

— and even so
The general, subject to a well-wish’d king,
Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness
Croud to his presence, where their untaught love
Must needs appear offence.

The other circumstances produced by Malone in support of his chronological argument are either too trifling to be repeated, or are rendered valueless by the discovery that the play was acted at court in 1604.* It is now generally believed to have been composed at the close of the year 1603, or early in 1604.

Mr. Hudson, in his very interesting and valuable *Lectures on Shakspeare*, a work which exhibits how carefully and philosophically the plays of the great dramatist are studied in America, observes that *Measure for Measure* is among *the least attractive, yet most instructive*, of Shakspeare’s plays.” Coleridge terms it “the only painful part of his genuine works.” Hazlitt observes “an original sin in the nature of the subject, which prevents our taking a cordial interest in it.” And nearly every critic has his say against this remarkable comedy.

Taking a view of the subject somewhat opposed to the opinion of Coleridge, it is necessary to state the grounds on which I venture to differ from so eminent a psychological critic; and I think it will be found, at the very commencement of the argument, a serious error has been committed by nearly all who have treated on the play, in estimating the extent of the crime for which Claudio was condemned.

* It is amusing to observe how very confident Ulrici is that it was not written before 1609. The internal evidence is of little avail.

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Ulrici says he had "seduced his mistress before marriage." This is, however, erroneous. In Shakspeare's time, the ceremony of betrothment was usually supposed to confer the power of matrimonial union. Claudio obtained possession of Julietta on "a true contract;" and provided marriage was celebrated within a reasonable time afterwards, no criminality could be alleged after the contract had been formally made. So, likewise, the Duke tells Mariana it was no sin to meet Angelo, for he was her "husband on a pre-contract." The story would be more properly analyzed by representing Claudio's error as venial, and Angelo's strictness so much the more severe, thus involving a greater antithesis in his fall. The only painful scene in the play is the subject of the argument between Angelo and Isabella; but Shakspeare is not to be blamed for the direction it takes. On the contrary, he has infinitely purified a barbarous tale *which the taste of the age authorized as a subject of dramatic representation*. The scenes between the lower characters would have been readily tolerated by a female audience in the time of the first James, and although they must now be passed over, we can hardly censure the poet for not foreseeing the extreme delicacy of a later age. The offences chiefly consist of a few gross words, which no one but literary antiquaries will comprehend, and are purposely left without explanation.

Bearing in mind that the improprieties of language above alluded to are faults of the age, not of the poet's judgment, and that a similar apology may be advanced for the choice of subject, the moral conveyed by *Measure for Measure* is of a deeply religious character. It exhibits in an outline of wonderful power, how ineffective are the strongest resolutions of men against the insidious temptation of beauty, when they are not firmly strengthened and guarded by religion. The prayers of Angelo came from his lips, not from his heart, and he fell. Isabella, on the contrary, is preserved by virtue grounded on religious faith. Her character is presented as nearly approaching perfection as is consistent with possible reality; and we rejoice that such a being should be snatched from the gloomy cloister to exercise her mild influence in a more useful station. The minor characters complete the picture of one of the chief phases of human life, the conflict of incontinence and chastity.

J. O. H.

The Comedy of Errors.

THE members of the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn celebrated their Christmas revels in the year 1594 with unusual spirit. Their hall was the abode of mock sovereignty, and the sports which anciently accompanied the Lord of Misrule; and the transactions of the revels were recorded by a member of the society in a manuscript which was afterwards published in 1688, under the title of *Gesta Grayorum*.* The author of this account, in concluding the annals of one day's proceedings, says, p. 22,—“After such sports, a *Comedy of Errors*, like to *Plautus his Menechmus*, was played by the players: so that night was begun and continued to the end in nothing but confusion and errors, whereupon it was ever afterwards called the *Night of Errors*.”

This notice of the play, which is not alluded to by either Collier or Knight, is extremely curious, proving that the *Comedy of Errors*, in some form or other, was in existence in December, 1594. An older play, called the *Historie of Error*, was acted at Hampton Court on January 1st, 1576-7, “enacted by the children of Powles,” and has been conjectured to be the foundation of Shakspeare's drama, which is alluded to by Meres in 1598, under the simple title of *Errors*. It may also be mentioned that when the *Comedy of Errors* was performed before James I. on December 28th, 1604, it is called the *Plaie of Errors*, and the author's name, *Shaxberd*, is written in the margin of the account. If we add to these circumstances the strong internal evidence that this is an early play, we shall be disposed to arrive at the conclusion that Shakspeare's *Comedy of Errors* was written in or before 1594, and that, in all probability, he was indebted for his materials to the older play, entitled the *History of Error*.

The *Menæchmi* of Plautus was not translated into English, or rather no English translation of it was printed, before 1595; but there are allusions in the *Comedy of Errors*, which, if not taken from the older play, appear to shew the poet's familiarity with some of the Latin classics, not an improbable supposition, it might be argued, in what Mr. Knight calls “an age of grammar schools;” but it happens, somehow or other, that when we really approach the sources used by Shakspeare, most of the learning is generally to be traced to the older compositions, or, at least, to contemporary popular works. Be this as it may, there are no similarities of sufficient weight to enable us to decide that Shakspeare borrowed direct from Plautus; and, I think, several circumstances to show that he did not. Among the latter may be reckoned there being no reason assigned for the presence of Æmilia, or for the curious fact of the two Dromios having the same name; oversights which are probably to be ascribed to the earlier play, and unlikely to have been committed by a poet who was chiefly using invented materials. The incidents which are common to the *Comedy of Errors* and the *Menæchmi* are, principally, the separation

* It appears from the dedication to this work, that it was printed in full from the original. The editor says, “It was thought necessary not to clip anything, which, though it may seem odd, yet naturally begets a veneration upon account of its antiquity.”

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of the twin sons; their perfect similarity in speech, countenance, and name; and the accidents happening to Menechmus and Antipholus of Syracuse, who both are troubled with jealous wives, and meet with similar adventures. The chief addition in Shakspeare is the introduction of the two Dromios, opening, as Skottowe observes, a new source of error and confusion, where most readers will be inclined to believe enough existed before. And this opinion would probably have been right, had these materials of error fallen into any other hands than those of Shakspeare.

The translator of the *Menechmi*, 1595, says, in his preface, that he had "diverse of this poettes comedies Englished, for the use and delight of his private friends, who in Plautus' owne words are not able to understand them." This was not an unusual practice, and we may hence conjecture that Shakspeare might have had an opportunity of perusing a translation, although none had been actually given to the public. On this account, it may be worth while to give the reader a specimen of the old English translation, selecting the second act of Plautus as a portion of the play which will, perhaps, serve to exhibit the striking deviations made by Shakspeare from the Latin original:—

Enter MENECHMUS SOSICLES, MESSENIO his servant, and some Saylers.

Men. Surely, Messenio, I thinke Sea-fairers never take so comfortable a joy in anything, as when they have been long tost and turmoyle in the wide seas, they hap at last to ken land.

Mess. Ile be sworn, I shuld not be gladder to see a whole country of mine owne, then I have bene at such a sight. But I pray, wherefore are we now come to Epidamnus? must we needs go to see everie towne that we heare off?

Men. Till I finde my brother, all townes are alike to me: I must trie in all places.

Mess. Why, then, let's even as long as wee live seeke your brother: six yeares now have we roamde about thus, Istria, Hispania, Massylia, Ilyria, all the upper sea, all high Greece, all haven towns in Italy. I think if we had sought a needle all this time, we must needs have found it, had it bene above ground. It cannot be that he is alive; and to seek a dead man thus among the living, what folly is it?

Men. Yea, could I but once find any man that could certainly enforme me of his death, I were satisfied; otherwise I can never desist seeking: Litle knowest thou, Messenio, how neare my heart it goes.

Mess. This is washing of a Blackamore. Faith, let's goe home, unlesse ye meane we should write a storie of our travaile.

Men. Sirra, no more of these sawcie speeches; I perceive I must teach ye how to serve me, not to rule me.

Mess. I, so; now it appeares what it is to be a servant. Wel, I must speake my conscience. Do ye heare, sir? Faith, I must tell ye one thing, when I looke into the leane estate of your purse, and consider advisedly of your decaying stocke, I hold it verie needful to be drawing homeward, lest, in looking your brother, we quite lose ourselves. For this assure yourselve, this towne Epidamnus is a place of outrageous expences, exceeding in all ryot and lasciviousnesse: and (I heare) as full of Ribaulds, Parasites, Drunkards, Catchpoles, Cony-catchers, and Sycophants, as it can hold. Then for curtizans, why here's the currantest stamp of them in the world. Ye must not thinke here to scape with as light cost as in other places. The verie name shews the nature; no man comes hither *sine damno*.

Men. Yee say very well indeed: give mee my purse into mine owne keeping, because I will so be the safer, *sine damno*.

Mess. Why, sir?

Men. Because I feare you will be busie among the curtizans, and so be cozened of it: then should I take great paines in belabouring your shoulders. So to avoid both these harms, Ile keep it myselve.

Mess. I pray do so, sir: all the better.

Enter CYLINDRUS.

Cyl. I have tickling geare here, yfaith, for ~~their~~ dinners: It grieves me to the heart to think how that cormorant knave Peniculus must have his share in these daintie morsels. But what? Is Menechmus come alreadie, before I could come from the market? Menechmus, how do ye, sir? how haps it ye come so soone?

Men. God a mercy, my good friend, doest thou know mee?

Cyl. Know ye? no, not I. Where's mouldichappes that must dine with ye? A murrin on his manners.

Men. Whom meanest thou, good fellow?

Cyl. Why Peniculus, worship, that lick-trencher, your parasiticall attendant.

Men. What Peniculus? what attendant? my attendant? Surely this fellow is mad.

Mess. Did I not tell ye what cony-catching villaines you should finde here?

Cyl. Menechmus, harke ye, sir; ye come too soone backe againe to dinner; I am but returned from the market.

Men. Fellow, here thou shalt have money of me; goe get the Priest to sacrifice for thee. I know thou art mad, els thou wouldst never use a stranger thus.

Cyl. Alas, sir, Cylindrus was wont to be no stranger to you. Know ye not Cylindrus?

Men. Cylindrus, or Coliendrus, or what the divell thou art, I know not, neither do I care to know.

Cyl. I know you to be Menechmus.

Men. Thou should'st be in thy wits, in that thou namest me so right; but, tell me, where hast thou known me?

Cyl. Where? even here, where ye first fell in love with my mistresse Erotium.

Men. I neither have lover, neither knowe I who thou art.

Cyl. Know ye not who I am? who fills your cup and dresses your meat at our house?

Mess. What a slave is this? That I had somewhat to breake the rascals pate withall!

Men. At your house! whenas I never came in Epidamnus till this day.

Cyl. Oh, that's true! Do ye not dwell in yonder house?

Men. Foule shame light upon them that dwell there for my part.

Cyl. Questionlesse, he is mad indeede, to curse himselfe thus Harke ye, Menechmus.

Men. What saist thou?

Cyl. If I may advise ye, ye shall bestow this money which ye offered me upon a sacrifice for yourselve: for out of doubt, you are mad that curse yourselve.

Mess. What a verlet art thou to trouble us thus!

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Cyl. Tush, he will many times jest with me thus. Yet when his wife is not by, 'tis a ridiculous jest.

Men. What 's that?

Cyl. This I say. Thinke ye I have brought meate inough for three of you? If not, Ile fetch more for you and your wench, and Snatcherust, your Parasite.

Men. What wenches? what Parasites?

Mess. Villaine, Ile make thee tell me what thou meanest by all this talke.

Cyl. Away, Jack Napes, I say nothing to thee, for I know thee not; I speake to him that I know.

Men. Out! drunken foole; without doubt thou art out of thy wits.

Cyl. That you shall see by the dressing of your meat. Go, go; ye were better to go in and finde somewhat to do there, whiles your dinner is making readie. Ile tell my mistresse ye be here.

Men. Is he gone? Messenio, I thinke uppon thy words alreadie.

Mess. Tush! marke, I pray. Ile laie fortie pound here dwels some curtizan to whom this fellow belongs.

Men. But I wonder how he knowes my name.

Mess. Oh, Ile tell yee. These courtizans, as soone as anie straunge shippe arriveth at the haven, they sende a boye or a wench to enquire what they be, what their names be, whence they come, wherefore they come, &c. If they can by any meanes strike acquaintance with him, or allure him to their houses, he is their owne. We are here in a tickle place, maister: tis best to be circumspect.

Men. I mislike not thy counsaile, Messenio.

Mess. I, but follow it then. Soft, here comes somebodie forth. Here, sirs, marriners, keep this same amongst you.

Enter EROTUM.

Er. Let the doore stand so. Away! it shall not be shut. Make haste within there, ho: Maydes, looke that all things be readie. Cover the boord, put fire under the perfuming pannes: let all things be very handsome. Where is hee that Cylindrus sayd stood without here? Oh! what meane you, sweet heart, that ye come not in? I trust you thinke yourselve more welcome to this house then to your owne, and great reason why you should do so. Your dinner and all things are readie as you willed. Will ye go sit downe?

Men. Whom doth this woman speake to?

Er. Even to you, sir: to whom else should I speake?

Men. Gentlewoman, ye are a straunger to me, and I marvel at your speeches.

Er. Yea, sir, but such a straunger, as I acknowledge ye for my best and dearest friend, and well you have deserved it.

Men. Surely, Messenio, this woman is also mad or drunke, that useth all this kindnesse to me uppon so small acquaintance.

Mess. Tush, did not I tell ye right? these be but leaves that fall upon you now, in comparison of the trees that wil tumble on your necke shortly. I told ye, here were silver tong'de haesters. But let me talke with her a little. Gentlewoman, what acquaintance have you with this man? where have you seene him?

Er. Where he sawe me, here in Epidamnum.

Mess. In Epidamnum? who never till this day set his foote within the towne?

Er. Go, go, flowting Jack! Menechmus, what neede all this? I pray go in.

Men. She also calls me by my name.

Mess. She smels your purse.

Men. Messenio, come hither: here, take my purse. Ile know whether she aime at me or my purse, ere I go.

Er. Will you go in to dinner, sir?

Men. A good motion; yea, and thanks with all my heart.

Er. Never thanke me for that which you commaunded to be provided for yourselve.

Men. That I commaunded?

Er. Yea, for you and your Parasite,

Men. My parasite?

Er. Peniculus, who came with you this morning, when you brought me the cloake which you got from your wife?

Men. A cloake that I brought you, which I got from my wife?

Er. Tush, what needeth all this jesting? Pray leave off.

Men. Jest or earnest, this I tell ye for a truth. I never had wife, neither have I; nor never was in this place till this instant; for only thus farre am I come, since I brake my fast in the ship.

Er. What ship do ye tell me off?

Mess. Marry, Ile tell ye: an old rotten weather-beaten ship, that we have sailed up and downe in these sixe yeares. Ist not time to be going homewards, thinke ye?

Er. Come, come, Menechmus, I pray leave this sporting, and go in.

Men. Well, gentlewoman, the truth is, you mistake my person; it is some other you looke for.

Er. Why, thinke ye I know ye not to be Menechmus, the sonne of Moschus, and have heard ye say, ye were borne at Siracusic where Agathocles did raigne; then Pythia, then Liparo, and now Hiero.

Men. All this is true.

Mess. Either shee is a witch, or else shee hath dwelt ther and knew ye there.

Men. Ile go in with her, Messenio; Ile see further of this matter.

Mess. Ye are cast away then.

Men. Why so? I warrant thee, I can lose nothing; something I shall gaine; perhaps a good lodging during my abode here. Ile dissemble with her another while. Nowe, when you please, let us go in. I made straunge with you, because of this fellow here, least he should tell my wife of the cloake which I gave you.

Er. Will ye staie any longer for your Peniculus, your Parasite?

Men. Not I, Ile neither staie for him, nor have him let come in, if he do come.

Er. All the better. But, sir, will you doo one thing for me?

Men. What is that?

Er. To beare that cloake you gave me to the diars, to have it new trimd and altdred.

Men. Yea, that will be well, so my wife shall not know it. Let mee have it with mee after dinner. I will but speake a word or two with this fellowe; then Ile follow ye in. Ho, Messenio, come aside. Goe and provide for thyselfe and these ship-boyes in some inne; then looke that after dinner you come hither for me.

Mess. Ah, maister, will ye be conycacht thus wilfully.

Men. Peace, foolish knave! seest thou not what a sot she is? I shal coozen her, I warrant thee.

Mess. Ay, Maister.

Men. Wilt thou be gone?

Mess. See, see; she hath him safe inough now. Thus he hath escaped a hundreth Pyrates hands at sea; and now one landrover hath bourded him at first encounter. Come away fellowes.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

It is supposed by most of the critics that the allusion to France by Dromio of Syracuse, "in her forehead, arm'd and reverted, *making war against her heir*," refers to King Henry IV., the *heir* of France, concerning whose succession to the throne there was a civil war in that country which did not conclude till the year 1593. There appears to be no reason for doubting the correctness of this opinion. In 1591, Lord Essex was sent with four thousand troops to the French King's assistance, and his brother Walter was killed before Rouen in Normandy. From that period, till Henry was firmly settled on the throne, Elizabeth sent several bodies of troops to his assistance, so that the war must have been sufficiently notorious for the allusion to be at once perceived by the audience.

The title of the play was either a common proverb or furnished the subject of one. Anton, in his *Philosophical Satires*, 1616, p. 51, exclaims, "What Comedies of Errors swell the stage! So, also, Decker, in his *Knights Conjuring*, 1607,—“his ignorance arising from his blindness, is the only cause of this Comedie of Errors;” and, previously, in his *Satiromastix*, 1602, he seems to allude to the play itself:—"Instead of the trumpets sounding thrice before the play begin, it shall not be amisse, for him that will read, first to beholde this short Comedy of Errors, and where the greatest enter, to give them, instead of hisse, a gentle correction." Again, also, in the *Meeting of Gallants at an Ordinarie*, 1604.—“This was a prettie Commedie of Errors, my round host.”

We learn from Drummond that Ben Jonson “had ane intention to have made a play like Plautus's *Amphitrio*, but left it of, for that he could never find two so like others that he could persuade the spectators they were one.” This difficulty is over-stated, for it suits the dramatic action of the piece to present the “rue with a difference.” It is not necessary, or even desirable, that the audience should be wholly deceived in the matter, and I suspect, in the present play at least, much of the ludicrous would be lost in the representation were that the case. It is sufficient that the two similar couples should be habited in simple Greek costume, which can be made alike in each case without adding to the violation of probability.

The materials of which the *Comedy of Errors* is constructed, chiefly belong to the cycle of farce, but they have been worked into a comedy by a wonderful effort of dramatic power; the lighter character, however, remaining prominent in particular scenes. Comedy would allow the two Antipholuses with a license similar to that which sanctions the resemblance between Sebastian and Viola; but the two Dromios in conjunction with the former certainly belong to farce. The admirable manner in which the mistakes arising from these identities are conducted, and the dignity given to the whole by the introduction of fine poetry most artistically interwoven, are indicative of that high dramatic genius which belongs almost exclusively to Shakspeare. The poetical conversation between Luciana and Antipholus of Syracuse reminds us forcibly of the *Sonnets*, and the similar ideas in the former are strengthened in power by being associated with a dramatic narrative; for had Shakspeare not been a dramatist, he would scarcely have ranked as so great a poet. No play of Shakspeare's, when either effectively read or acted, affords so many subjects for broad merriment as this; and it says little for the taste of the present day, that so many worthless pieces should be produced, while a regular drama, containing all the best qualities of farce, being its general character subdued by poetic taste, should be suffered to remain entirely neglected.

J. O. H.

Twelfth-Night; or, What You Will.

THERE has been much discussion concerning the date which should be assigned to this exquisite comedy. The industry of the commentators on Shakspeare's immortal dramas is indeed remarkable; they pore over histories, and antique chronicles long since forgotten; examine ancient, obsolete, and repealed acts of Parliament; and dive deeply into that most laborious of all reading, the great mass of manuscript works preserved in the library of the British Museum. All this they do to discover some allusion to Shakspeare made by contemporary minds, some information which should shed light upon obscure passages, and references to events, domestic or historical, but now haply quite forgotten. And to them we certainly owe the circumstance of our being in possession of a much purer and correct text of "the many-sided master-mind" of England, than our ancestors possessed a century ago. Still, they have not been able to fix the date of the comedy of *Twelfth-Night*, with an accuracy which cannot be questioned.

Mr. Tyrwhitt assigned its production to the year 1614, for the following slender reason. Antonio addressing Sir Toby Belch (Act III., scene 4), says,—

——— If this young gentleman
Have done offence, I take the fault on me.

To which the jovial knight, ever ready for a brawl, replies,—

Nay if you be an *undertaker*, I am for you.

This, Mr. Tyrwhitt imagined to contain an allusion to some persons, who, in 1614, had undertaken, through their influence in the House of Commons, to carry things according to the king's wishes, and who were consequently branded with the invidious name of *undertakers*; which soon became a common cognomen for any offensive person. Mr. Tyrwhitt thinks that Shakspeare would not have made use of this allusion, unless the circumstance was very recent and fresh in the public recollection, and for this reason, and this only, he assigns 1614, as the date of the production of the play. But unfortunately for Mr. Tyrwhitt's hypothesis, a reference to the journals of the House of Commons, shews that the terms *takers* and *undertakers* had been frequently used in King James's Parliament, anteriorly to 1614. Mr. Ritson observes, that "*Undertakers* were persons employed by the king's purveyors to take up provisions for the royal household, and were, no doubt, exceedingly odious;" so that an allusion to this word, even if intended in a political sense, would not serve to appropriate the date 1614. Sir Toby, doubtless, intended a mere quibble on the word, of which the meaning evidently is, that of one man taking upon himself the quarrel of another;—if you do so, I am for you. This supposition then, although it has, more or less, occupied the attention of every commentator upon Shakspeare, is too trifling and unimportant to serve as a valid foundation for any lengthened argument upon the subject.

TWELFTH-NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL.

Mr. Chalmers assigns the date of 1613 to the play, that is one year earlier; and he advances three reasons to support his opinion. The first is trivial and unimportant, but the second is entitled to more consideration. It is founded upon the plainly evident intention of Shakspeare to place the practice of duelling in a ridiculous light. Duelling was in high fashion at this period—a perfect rage for it existed, and a man was distinguished or valued in the select circles of society in proportion to his skill and courage in this savage and murderous practice. Our poet well knew the power of ridicule often exceeded that of the law, and in the combat between the valiant Sir Andrew Aguecheek and the disguised Viola, he has placed the custom in an eminently absurd situation. Mr. Chalmers supposes that his attention was drawn to it by an edict of James the First, issued in the year 1613; from his remarks we quote the following:—

In *Twelfth-Night* Shakspeare tried to effect, by ridicule, what the state was unable to perform by legislation. The duels, which were so incorrigibly frequent in that age, were thrown into a ridiculous light by the affair between Viola and Sir Andrew Aguecheek. Sir Francis Bacon had lamented, in the House of Commons, on the 3rd of March, 1609–10, the great difficulty of redressing the evil of duels, owing to the corruption of man's nature. King James tried to effect what the Parliament had despaired of effecting; and, in 1613, he issued "An edict and censure against private combats," which was conceived with great vigour, and expressed with decisive force; but, whether with the help of Bacon or not, I am unable to ascertain. This is another remarkable event in 1613, which the commentators have overlooked, though it may have caught Shakspeare's eye.

Mr. Chalmers founds his third reason why he assigns the date of 1613 to this play, upon an obscure allusion to a political event of the period. Fabian tells Sir Toby that he would not give up his part of the sport in the plot against Malvolio, "*for a pension of thousands to be paid from the Sophy*;" and Sir Toby tells Sir Andrew Aguecheek that notwithstanding the effeminacy of Viola's appearance (when disguised as Cesario), that he had been "*fencer to the Sophy*." The meaning of this word is to be found in the following narrative; in 1613, Sir Anthony Shirley published his *Travels in Persia; with his dangers and distresses, and his strange and unexpected deliverances*;" that Sir Robert Shirley, his brother, arrived in October, 1611, as Ambassador from the *Sophy*; bringing with him a Persian princess, as his wife; and that he remained here through the whole of the year 1612, at an expense to the king of four pounds a day. There was, no doubt, much talk about the wealth and magnificence of the *Sophy* at that period, and it was therefore natural that Shakspeare writing *Twelfth-Night* at the time of the ambassador's departure, should allude to it; and he would not have been likely to make any mention of it when the affair was nearly forgotten.

The Rev. Joseph Hunter, another industrious commentator, in the second part of his *New Illustrations of the Life, Studies, and Writings of Shakspeare*, assigns a much earlier date to this comedy, namely, about 1599, but certainly not later than 1601. This conclusion he arrives at from a passage which he has discovered in a manuscript work in the British Museum, being a sort of journal by one John Manningham, a barrister of the Middle Temple, at this period. The passage is as follows:—

"1601. Feb. 2.—At our feast, wee had a play called *Twelve-Night; or, What you Will*, much like the *Comedy of Errors*, or *Menechmi*, in Plautus; but most like and neere to that in Italien, called *Inganni*. A good practice in it to make the steward believe his lady widdowe* was in love with him, by counterfayting a letter as from his lady in generall termes, telling him what shee liked best in him, and prescribing his gesture in smiling, his apparraile, &c., and when he came to practise, making him believe they took him to be mad."

But I must leave this question of the chronology of the play to be settled by antiquarian research; I mention the various speculations of different writers for the satisfaction of the curious, but am myself content with the certain knowledge that we have the play, and a glorious production it is; in sentiment exquisite, passionate, delirious in excessive beauty; we may say in the language of its author:—

It gives a very echo to the seat,
Where Love is throned!

* It is supposed that this play was subsequently altered and retouched by Shakspeare, and that the Lady Olivia was originally represented as a widow. In this journal the writer has recorded a personal anecdote of Shakspeare, which is not, however, much in his favour. It relates to his having supplanted his fellow-actor, Burbage, in an assignation, and turning it off with the joke that "William the Conqueror was before Richard the Third;" which was the character Burbage represented when the assignation was made.

TWELFTH-NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL.

For simplicity of plot, and arrangement of characters—for an amusing series of adventures—and for propriety of design, it has scarcely an equal. We have in it two plots, totally dissimilar, yet bound up together by so fine and imperceptible a link, that you cannot tell where the one merges into the other.

Dryden was wont to pique himself on the perfection with which he had formed the plot of the *Spanish Fryar*. He could not mean it, surely. You can dis sever the one from the other, without injury; and, if we mistake not, the comedy of the ungodly son of the church has been played separately as a farce, leaving the tragedy in its dusty glory upon the shelf. Let us, however, *en passant*, notice a remarkably fine image in “glorious John’s” comedy—

The dial spoke not—but it made *shrewd signs*,
And pointed full upon the stroke of murder’

What is the subject of the comedy, after all? Love: the Duke’s love for Olivia—the love of Viola for the Duke—the new-born love of Olivia for the disguised Viola; and there is a sly *penchant* growing between Sir Toby and Maria; they are assimilated together by their love of fun.

The plots of our great poet are of a very universal kind; but those in which the genial sunshine of his warm heart is invested, where his humanity becomes tender, and his imagination glowing, are his love-plots. This passion, of course, works differently in different persons. Behold how finely terrible it is in Romeo and Juliet!—behold it again, like a yeasty sea, working in the flaming heart of Othello!—how overpowering, how infinite it is in Hamlet—

— I loved Ophelia; forty thousand brothers,
Could not with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum.

How graceful it appears in Bassanio—how manly in the chivalrous Valentine—and, in this comedy, how tender and subdued it shews itself; even to tears.

Neither is there here any mark of elaborate construction. The artist is not seen endeavouring to force a catastrophe: the characters fall into their places with a natural ease and grace, as if they were our veritable neighbours, and we already knew all about them. A noble-natured lady, mourning for her brother’s death, will not for grief listen to the manly and ardent wooing of the Duke, and a maiden, “beautiful exceedingly,” whose heart has become a shrine where in turn love for the Duke burns with a calm, undecaying constancy, yet having little or no hope of return, so that when we hear her urging Orsino’s suit into Olivia’s unwilling ears, we sympathise the more strongly with her—knowing that all this time runs a trembling through her voice, which speaks more of suffering than could many complaining words. There is a magic in it, too, for all that; and even the cold Olivia feels it as the tones fall around her heart, and she, that could not, or would not, love, for very excess of grief, now loves in despite of it, as ’twere against her will; and we see that she had not forgotten her woman’s wit and tact, when she sends Malvolio after the “peevish messenger” with her ring. The scene of this pleasant “comédie” is in Illyria, a warm and sunny clime, peculiarly so at the bright “season of the year,” when love most rejoices, and smiles in the bright and beauteous face of nature with a serener joy. A clime where the moon is far more beautiful in its soft brightness than the sun, and where the night is something so intensely lovely, that words often fail to describe it. Where fruits blush among green leaves, and baccated bushes bend beneath the ruddy load they bear. Where the slightest breath of air cools one’s brow, and wakes up a slumberous sound among the leaves, that with tiny cymbals makes softest music, and you hear the fresh grateful melodies of falling waters.

Its comedy is rich, hearty, rollicking, abandoned; actually glorious in its wild, mad, measureless revelry.

“In no point,” says Mr. Thomas Carlyle, “does he (Shakspeare) *exaggerate*, but only in laughter. Fiery objurgations, words that pierce and burn, are to be found in Shakspeare: yet he is always in measure here; never what Johnson would remark as a specially ‘good hater.’ But his laughter seems to pour from him in floods; he heaps all manner of ridiculous nicknames on the butt tumbles

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST.

they meet; in this dilemma the sophistry of Biron is readily accepted by his companions as a palliative for perjury. Shakspeare might have intended to imply that such quibbling triflers and gay jesting butterflies were not to be trusted, and that those who are constantly playing with the meaning of words, are not easily bound by them. He might also have intended to show the folly of ill-considered and precipitate vows, which men are hourly tempted to break by their own desires, and by such temptations as accident constantly places in their path.

But this great poet could do nothing altogether bad; although the plot of this comedy is meagre, the characters mere sketches, and the language frequently trivial and poor, yet the characters are not only diversified and original, but it contains numerous passages of sparkling brilliancy and true poetic beauty. Amongst these may be reckoned Rosaline's description of Biron, in the first scene of the second act, which is, indeed, the counterpart of a true wit, and not of an extravagant quibbler. The lines:—

A merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal:

express the poet's disapproval of that flippant wit which pursues its conceits without regard to time or circumstance, and which he makes Rosaline, in the end, severely censure in her jesting lover. The soliloquy of Biron, on discovering that he is in love, is another fine passage, exceedingly brilliant and dashing—full of that fine flow of animal spirits which characterize all Shakspeare's comedies. And the speech of Biron, at the conclusion of the fourth act, although sophistical, is full of beauty.

A fine description of conversation is also uttered by Sir Nathaniel, the curate, in the opening of the fifth act, of which Dr. Johnson says—"Perhaps all the precepts of Castiglione will scarcely be found to comprehend a rule for conversation so justly delineated, so widely dilated, and so nicely finished." But the gem of the play is, where Rosaline, to subdue the "gibing spirit" of her lover, enjoins him to purchase her hand by a twelvemonth's penance; in the interval of which he shall jest to the groaning or speechless sick, to men crushed beneath the iron heel of poverty, or sunk deep in hopelessness and despair; and if they will listen to his idle scorns, she will accept him and that flouting disposition also: but if not, if he finds "mirth cannot move a soul in agony," she entreats him to throw away that flippant spirit, and he will find her happy in his reformation. In this speech, the genius of the young poet stands erect in the consciousness of power, and challenges comparison with the finest creations of his maturity.

This comedy has a greater variety of characters than might be expected in so early a production: Biron, the witty courtier; Armado, the refined traveller, "that hath a mint of phrases in his brain;" Sir Nathaniel, the quiet, chatty curate, "a foolish, mild man—an honest man, look you, and soon dashed;" Holofernes, the schoolmaster, full of words and barren of thoughts; Dull, the obtuse constable, whom Shakspeare afterwards reproduced as Dogberry; Costard, the clown, with his native, rustic wit, who may be looked upon as an elder brother of that interesting and amusing family, the fools of Shakspeare; and Moth, that "most acute juvenal;" are all original creations. Shakspeare had probably drawn them from such society as he would have been likely to meet in early life; and perhaps the schoolmaster and the curate are but exaggerated portraits of those from whom he received his own instruction. The fault with the comic characters is, that they are not sufficiently developed: the author has attempted too much to do justice to all; and when we have formed an intimate acquaintance with some of the most interesting of them, they disappear. Coleridge says, when speaking of this play—"True genius begins by generalizing and condensing: it ends in realising and expanding." This is peculiarly the case with Shakspeare: in his maturer works, he ever delighted to retouch, dilate, and continue his characters into other scenes. We like Falstaff the most of all his comic creations, not only on account of his inexhaustible humour, but because we know the most of him.

No novel or other work has been discovered on which this comedy appears to have been founded; and we may therefore assume the plot to be of the poet's own invention.

H. T.

All's Well that Ends Well.

TO one of the stories in that world-famous collection of romances, the *Decameron* of Boccaccio, is Shakspeare indebted for the plot of this comedy. Our poet, who was evidently unacquainted with the Italian language, appears to have followed a translation of Boccaccio's tale, made by William Paynter, a clerk of the armoury to Queen Elizabeth. Giletta of Narbona is contained in the first volume of his *Palace of Pleasure*, a collection of stories derived from various sources, ancient and modern. "His version," says Mr. Collier, "of the tale of Gigletta di Narbona is faithful, and that seems to have been the principal excellence at which he aimed, for he was certainly not an elegant writer of English, even for the time at which he flourished." The story is very short, and, as Mr. Collier has said, by no means remarkable, either for elegance or poetry of language. Still Shakspeare has closely adhered to the incidents, so far as they went; but he has considerably amplified them, and many of the characters are altogether his own; and among these entirely original creations, are the widowed and amiable Countess Rousillon, the garrulous, but shrewd old Lord Lafeu, Monsieur Lavatch the clown, and the boasting coward Parolles. With the exception of Helena, the heroine of the play, these grafts of the great poet upon the original tale, are the most interesting and prominent characters.

This comedy is attributed to the year 1598, a period when the author was rising into the maturity of his genius, and when, indeed, he had produced some of his greatest plays. It is supposed that it was intended as a companion piece to *Love's Labour's Lost* (although it is greatly superior to that production), and originally called *Love's Labour's Won*, as a piece so named is contained in Francis Meres's list of our author's plays, and that title would apply to none of them but the one under consideration. Shakspeare's reason for altering the title is unknown, but it is probable that he thought the present name, which was a proverb in common use in his time, would draw a larger share of attention, and consequent popularity to his play.

The interest of the serious part of this comedy clusters around Helena, a young lady of great beauty and intellect, brought up, since the death of her father, a distinguished physician, by the Countess of Rousillon. She conceives an affection for the son of her protectress, the young Count Bertram, but lives in despair of his returning her love. In the opening of the play, she thus beautifully describes her hopeless passion;—

It were all one
That I should love a bright particular star,
And think to wed it; he is so above me!
In his bright radiance and collateral light
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.
The ambition in my love thus plagues itself.
The hind that would be mated with the lion
Must die for love.

Bertram, who is a ward of the king's, leaves for the court; Helena follows him, cures the king of an apparently incurable disease, by means of some valuable prescription left to her by her father, and being promised by the monarch, as a reward, the hand of any of his young nobles in marriage, she claims Bertram for her husband. The young count marries her at the command of the king, but

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

sends her from him in disdain, and declares, that until she can obtain a ring upon his finger, which he will never part with, and is the mother of a child of his, he will not reside with her as his wife, or return to his home while she is beneath its roof. Helena then shows the depth of her affection for her scornful husband. Sooner than he shall be exposed to the danger of the war, to which he has fled to avoid her, she determines to leave the residence of the Countess, although---

The air of paradise did fan the house,
And angels officed all.

She eventually accomplishes the apparently impossible conditions laid upon her by her husband: obstinacy is subdued by intellect, and he is won to happiness.

Having parted with his ring to a young Florentine maid, as the price of her honour, who then promises to admit him at midnight to her chamber, provided he will not speak to her, or remain there longer than an hour; the slighted Helena receives him instead of the young Florentine, and thus obtains his ring, and becomes a mother. She has then doubly won him, and Bertram eventually loves and honours her as his wife. It is singular that a young lady like Helena, whose great personal beauty is yet outrivalled by her mental graces and powers, should be so enamoured of Bertram, on account of his appearance only. She speaks admiringly of—

His archéd brows, his hawking eye, his curls,

but says nothing of any noble qualities of mind or disposition that he possesses. He is courageous only—a mere soldier; and the love of the high-minded, accomplished girl, is based but on an “idolatrous fancy.” Shakspeare probably meant this as an instance of the tyranny of love, and also to show that, in youth, passion triumphs over judgment, and yields no subjection to reason. “This story,” says Schlegel, “as well as that of *Grissel*, and many similar ones, is intended to prove that woman’s truth and patience will, at last, triumph over man’s abuse of his superior power; while other novels and *fabliaux* are, on the other hand, true satires on woman’s inconsistency and cunning.”

I could have wished that the long discussion between Parolles and Helena in the first act had been given to some other character; it profanes the otherwise delicate modesty of her nature, which is on no other occasion overstepped or laid aside; even in her strange plan to obtain the affections of her husband. This coarse dialogue, witty and ingenious as it is, would have been better omitted; it was one of Shakspeare’s numerous concessions to the sensuality of his audiences. The Countess is a highly interesting character; Shakspeare invests all his matrons with dignity; he is no ungallant poet, who represents the young only as attractive. The amiability and wisdom of the Countess win our admiration, and her directions to her son on his leaving her for the court, though brief, may be justly placed in comparison with Polonius’s sage and excellent advice to Laertes on a similar occasion. The king is a philosophical invalid, who utters many valuable moral truths; his expostulation with Bertram on his pride of birth is a piece of powerful reasoning. It is equally true as strange that, despite our lofty pretensions and cherished ancestral dignities, our blood poured altogether “would quite confound distinction.” Parolles is the great comic creation of the piece, a fop, a fool, a liar, a braggart, and every way a knave; and yet, with all these vices, amusing enough. He is too contemptible for anger; we almost pity him when he is discovered and disgraced, and even when he is exposed to the unmerciful raillery of the jovial old lord, Lafew, who says “there can be no kernel in this light nut; the soul of this man is his clothes.” His adventure in search of the lost drum, which he swears he will recover or perish in attempting to do so, and then goes out for a walk at night to devise some account of his expedition, is a piece of admirable comedy. But his being taken prisoner by his own companions (who suspect his cowardice), blindfolded, and made to confess to them the secrets of their own camp, is irresistibly amusing; equal in broad fun to Falstaff’s midnight adventure at Gadshill. But Parolles cannot extricate himself from a difficulty with the same dexterity that is evinced by the jovial fat knight

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

once discovered he is disgraced for ever, and he resolves to give up military pretensions, and live "safest in shame." He turns parasite, and gets his bread by flattery. In this new capacity he shews great dexterity, and when he enters in soiled and ragged attire, he propitiates the old Lord Lafeu in his favour by a delicate compliment, "O my good lord, you were the first that found me;" that is your strong sense and discernment first discovered me to be a braggart, and no soldier. The shrewd old noble is flattered into compassion, and exclaims, "though you are a fool and a knave, you shall eat: go to, follow."

Monsieur Lavatch, the clown, with his answer that suits all questions, adds to the comic interest of the play, and may fairly take rank with Touchstone and Feste for humour and equivocating wit.

In noticing the beauties of this comedy, the scene where the young Count Bertram woos Diana to yield to his impetuous and unlawful love should not be forgotten; a finer sermon on maiden purity was never preached; a holier caution to young and susceptible beauty never fell from the lips of either moralist or sage. A distinguished American statesman, whose leisure hours were frequently given to an appreciative study of the dramas of our poet, said that he always regarded him as a moral teacher, and that unless his writings were so estimated, no one could study them profitably—they had not the key. Without acquiescing in this unqualified statement, I am still prepared to assert that a code of morality of the most irreproachable and elevated character can be selected from his dramas; while, on the other hand, although coarse expressions and immodest ideas not unfrequently occur, no false or immoral *principle* can be supported by quotations from his works. Shakspeare's faults as a moralist arise, not from vice, but levity. The tendency of the great poet's muse may be gathered from this scene; the high character of maiden honour is thus illustrated. Diana solicits Bertram's monumental ring; he answers he cannot give it, because,—

It is an honour 'longing to our house;
Bequeathéd down from many ancestors;
Which were the greatest obloquy i' the world
In me to lose.

She, with great intellectual dignity, and with reason unanswerable, replies :—

Mine honour's such a ring :
My chastity's the jewel of our house,
Bequeathéd down from many ancestors;
Which were the greatest obloquy i' the world
In me to lose. Thus your own proper wisdom
Brings in her champion honour on my part,
Against your vain assault.

The retort is exquisite, and finally, the maiden triumphs, and the deceiver is deceived.

Our poet, with his usual prodigality of beautiful and noble thoughts, has given much of the exquisite language with which this comedy abounds to very brief and unimportant characters. Every scene, indeed, contains beauties, and it is to be regretted that so fine a comedy should be so seldom represented on the stage; in times of sadness, difficulty, or danger, we may always recollect with advantage its concluding moral :—

The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet.

H. T.



MR. MACREADY AS KING JOHN,
AND
MR. COOPER AS HUBERT.

K. JOHN. Do not I know thou wouldst good Hubert, Hubert,
Hubert throw thine eye on yon young boy.

KING JOHN. *Act 3, Sc. 3.*

Engraved by Hollis from the Original Painting by Reid, in the possession of the Publishers.

JOHN TALLIS & COMPANY, LONDON & NEW YORK.



MISS GLYN AS CONSTANCE.

"To me, and to the state of my great grief,
Let kings assemble; for my griefs so great
That no supporter but the huge firm earth
Can hold it up. Here I and sorrow sit;
Here is my throne; bid kings come bow to it."

KING JOHN.
Act 3. Sc 1.

Engraved by George Greatbach from a Daguerreotype by Paine & Minston

King John.

THE plays of Shakspeare which he has founded upon English history, have seized so strongly on the national mind, that they are received not as dramas only but as history ; but our poet did not invariably follow historic truth so closely as he might have done, nor are events always related with sufficient regard to their order in point of time. He seized the most dramatic incidents of a reign, and crowded them rapidly one upon another, drawing them within a narrow circle, and not unfrequently passed over some of the most important events, in reference to the political and social state of the people. In *King John* no allusion is made to what every Englishman must regard as the great event of that reign, the wringing from the reluctant tyrant, at Runnymede, the great basis of our national liberties—the MAGNA CHARTA. In *Henry the Eighth*, also, the poet has, with great art, forborne to touch upon any of the numerous dark spots of that monarch's character, while the great event of that reign—the REFORMATION—remains, partially perhaps from the nature of the subject, untouched.

The errors or omissions of Shakspeare are important matters, because they generate errors and false ideas in his admirers : that is, in all who speak the English language. It is, therefore, necessary to point out his historical discrepancies as we touch upon each play of the series, as well as to enumerate the beauties of the plays themselves. Many critics have rather falsified the trust reposed in them in this respect, forgetful that truth, whether popular or unpopular, is their first duty ; and that the language of indiscriminate eulogy, though it may be acceptable to the unlearned enthusiast, is distasteful and even disgusting to the calm discriminating mind. Having sounded this note of preparation, I will address myself to a consideration of the tragedy before us.

John ascended the throne in 1199, in his thirty-second year ; Shakspeare's play commences shortly after, and embraces the whole of his reign, a period of seventeen years. The first two acts of the play carry us only through the first year of John's reign, up to 1200, when he gave his niece Blanch, of Castile, in marriage to Lewis, the eldest son of Philip of France. John's divorce of his first wife, and his marriage with Isabella, the daughter of the Count of Angouleme, together with the consequent revolts of many of his barons, are passed over in silence. The death of Arthur, the young duke of Brittany, which occurred in 1203, is not related in the manner in which it is now supposed it took place, although, as the event is shrouded in mystery, it is possible Shakspeare's account may be the correct one. Arthur was not a child, but rising to manhood, and had sought safety from his uncle by a coalition with Philip, the powerful king of France, to whose daughter he was affianced. Animated by a love of military fame, the young prince had broken into Poitou, at the head of a small army, and hearing that his grandmother, Queen Eleanor, who had always been his enemy, was residing at Mirabeau, he determined to take that fortress, and obtain possession of her person ; in attempting this, he was himself captured, fell into the hands of his uncle John, and was committed to the custody of Hubert de Bourg. Hubert saved the prince from an assassin sent to destroy him, and spread a report of his death ; but it excited such indignation in the revolted barons, that he thought it prudent to reveal the truth. This sealed the doom of the young prince ; not long after he disappeared, and was never heard of again. Most accounts, however, represent the tyrant as murdering his nephew with his own hands. This deed of guilt was supposed to have taken place at Rouen ; Shakspeare represents Arthur to have met his death by attempting to escape from the castle of Northampton. Of the prisoners taken by John with the prince, twenty-two noblemen are said to have been starved to death in Corfe Castle.

A lapse of ten years occurs between the fourth and fifth acts of Shakspeare's tragedy, during which the famous dispute between John and the astute and subtle pontiff, Innocent III., took place respecting

KING JOHN.

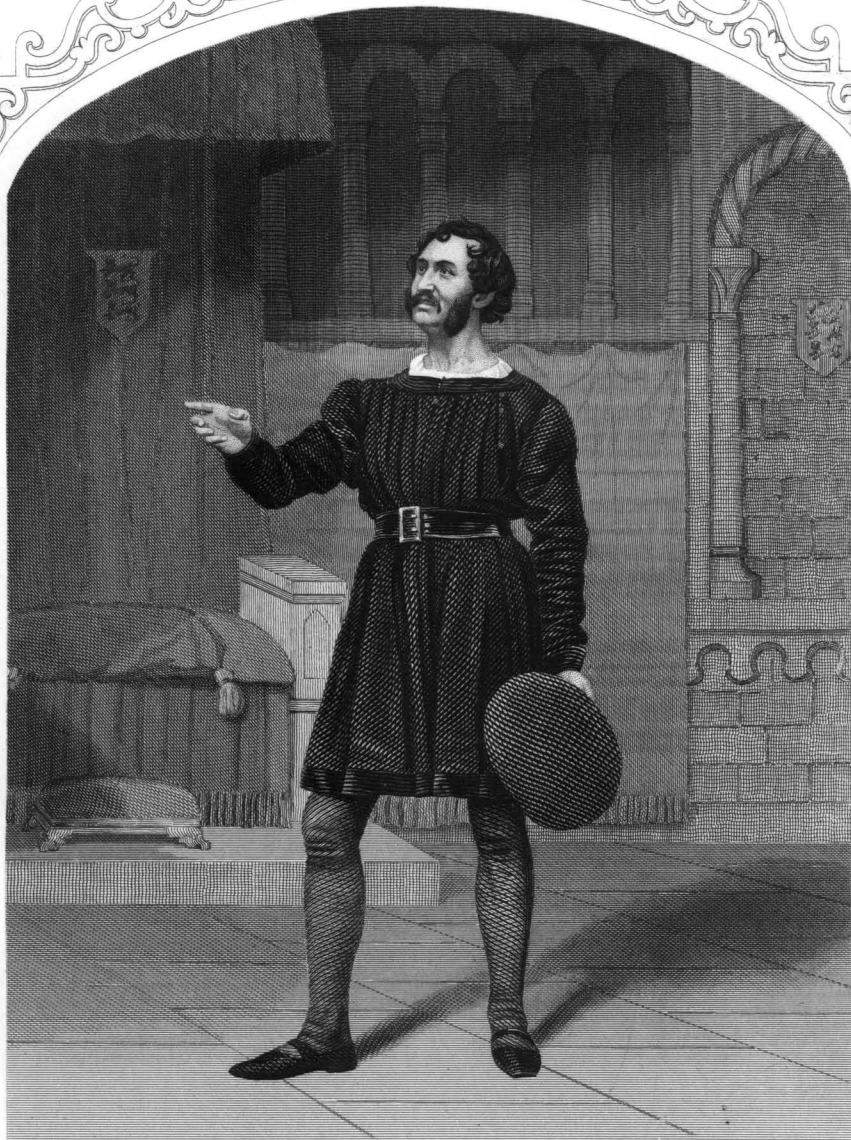
the right of appointing the archbishop of Canterbury. After the pope had fulminated the sentences of excommunication and deposition against John, and had roused France to execute the latter decree, the feeble and vacillating monarch humbly submitted himself, and took an oath of fealty to Rome. He had previously, with flashing eyes and lips livid with anger, thundered out to his trembling prelates these haughty words :—" By God's teeth, if you, or any of your body, dare to lay my states under interdict, I will send you and all your clergy to Rome, and confiscate your property. As for the Roman shavelings, if I find any in my dominions, I will tear out their eyes and cut off their noses, and so send them to the pope, that the nations may witness their infamy." Had not John's weakness and timidity been equal to his ferocity, he might have been the scourge of Rome and the terror of Europe.

On the memorable 15th of June, 1215, John signed the Great Charter at Runnymede, having not long before said :—" And why do they not demand my crown, also? By God's teeth, I will not grant them liberties which will make me a slave!" After signing this memorable deed, John was plunged in despair, and is said to have acted with the furious imbecility of a madman; he blasphemed, raved, gnashed his teeth, and gnawed sticks and straws, in the intensity of his impotent passion. He soon repented of the liberty which he had granted to his barons and his people, and made war upon them to regain it. He surrounded himself with a host of savage foreign mercenaries, the chiefs of whom were called "Manleon, the bloody;" "Falco, without bowels;" "Walter Buch, the murderer;" "Sottim, the merciless;" and "Godeschall, the iron-hearted." These ruffians gave every village they passed to the flames, and put John's English subjects to horrible tortures, to compel them to confess where they had concealed their wealth.

But the hand of heaven arrested the progress of this incarnate fiend; John died in the October of the year following that in which he had placed his hand to the charter. He breathed his last at the castle of Newark, on the Trent, and not at Swinsted (or Swineshead) Abbey. It is possible that he might have been poisoned, but that story is not told by any writer of the time, and is a tradition on which we cannot place much reliance. The most probable account is, that he ate gluttonously of some peaches, and immediately after drank a quantity of new cider. This, in his distempered state, was cause enough to produce the fever which destroyed him.

The last acts of John's life, as represented by the iron pen of history, excite alternately the strongest feelings of indignation and disgust; but the death of John, as depicted by Shakspeare, wins our pity for the expiring tyrant. Even during his life, the poet represents him as not devoid of a certain princely courage and dignity. The dramatist treats the subject too tenderly; he omits many of the darker points of the picture; superior as he was to most of the prejudices of ordinary minds, still he seems to have been dazzled by a superstitious reverence for kings; he appears never to forget that "divinity" which he has said for ever guards a monarch. John wrote his own history in deeds of fire and of blood, and this licentious, cowardly, treacherous, and cruel king, should be held up for ever to the unmitigated scorn and abhorrence of posterity.

In considering this play without any reference to history, we must speak of it very highly; though destitute of the poetic halo which beautifies many of the bard's more imaginative dramas, it is still invested with a warlike and solemn grandeur. We feel that the theme is kingdoms, and the chief actors princes. The air seems to resound with the brazen clang of trumpets and the clash of arms; the sunbeams gild the banners of rival armies, and dance upon the plumed crests of thousands of brave knights. The secret motives of monarchs are divined with the accuracy of a seer, and the hearts of kings laid bare in the sight of the people. The interest never flags for a moment; the play has several strongly marked characters, most effectively grouped together. The dark portrait of John is finely contrasted with the bold chivalrous bastard, Faulconbridge, "the very spirit of Plantagenet," who appears to be entirely a creation of the poet. He is the sunshine of the picture--his mirthful sallies relieve the oppressed spirits, after some of the painful tragic scenes, and chase away the gloomy shadows which seem rapidly closing around us. His fine natural spirits, shrewd worldly sense, undaunted courage, and witty, sparkling discourse, bespeak him a son of the lion-



MR. HENRY BETTY AS FAULCONBRIDGE

"Madam, I would not wish a better father."

KING JOHN.

Act 1, Sc 1.



Engraved by Hollis from a Daguerreotype by Paine of Islington.

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KING JOHN.

hearted Richard. The brave, reckless, but manly-tempered hero of Palestine, seems to live again in him, somewhat modified by difference of station. Witnessing the interested motives of all around him, he exclaims, "gain be my lord! for I will worship thee;" but he is an honest soldier, and serves the king with an undeviating integrity that was worthy of a nobler master. In this character the poet has shown that great talents and energy employed in a bad cause, seldom enjoy a lengthened triumph; but, like an ill-manned vessel on an unexplored sea, drift about in uncertainty and peril. Faulconbridge becomes a serious man, and accumulated disasters wring from his iron nature a prayer to heaven not to tempt him above his power.

Lady Constance is an instance of maternal affection and dangerous ambition; these united feelings prompt her to claim the crown of England for her child, and thus to plunge the kingdom into a fearful war to gratify her feelings, and to advance her son. The title of John was at the least as good as that of Arthur, if not less liable to objection. But in the final anguish of the bereaved mother we forget the ambition of the woman; the intensity of her grief is painfully affecting, and few can listen to the passionate exclamations wrung from her breaking heart, when Arthur is captured by his uncle John, without a sympathising tear. Her question to the Cardinal, whether she shall know her child in heaven? and her rejoinder to the expostulation of king Philip—

Grief fills up the room of my absent child, &c.,

pierce every bosom, soften every heart. The character of Arthur is made sweetly touching from the helplessness of infancy, and the extreme gentleness of his nature. The poet, in deviating slightly from historic truth, gained, in this instance, a great dramatic advantage. The want of ambition and utter unobtrusiveness of the young prince endears him to us—

So I were out of prison and kept sheep,
I should be as merry as the day is long.

That is his modest thought; happy had it been for him could it have been realised; but the grim red-handed fiend of murder dogs his guileless steps, and drives him to a blood-stained grave.

There are two scenes which stand prominently out from the rest: the one where the troubled tyrant works upon Hubert to undertake the death of Arthur, in which the fiendish character of John is shown without a veil; and the other where Hubert endeavours to execute his revolting commission of burning out the eyes of the young prince, but is diverted from his savage purpose by the poor boy's tears and entreaties. These two scenes deserve to be ranked with the grandest tragic efforts of the poet. The scene where John recriminates the guilt of Arthur's death upon Hubert, and equivocates respecting the warrant for it, is also highly Shaksperian.

The closing scene is touched by a master-hand; we pity the death-struck wretch writhing in anguish before us, who is described as singing in his agony. Painful is his reply to his son's inquiry as to his state, solemnly affecting from its profound and irredeemable misery:—

Poisoned :—ill fare !—dead,—forsook,—cast off !

A terrible retribution has come upon the tyrant; body and soul seem perishing before us.

A play, entitled *The Troublesome Raigne of John King of England, &c.*, in two parts, was printed in 1591, without the name of its author. Mr. Malone supposes it to have been written by Robert Greene, or George Peele; and that it certainly preceded Shakspeare's play, which is supposed to have been written in 1596.

H. T.

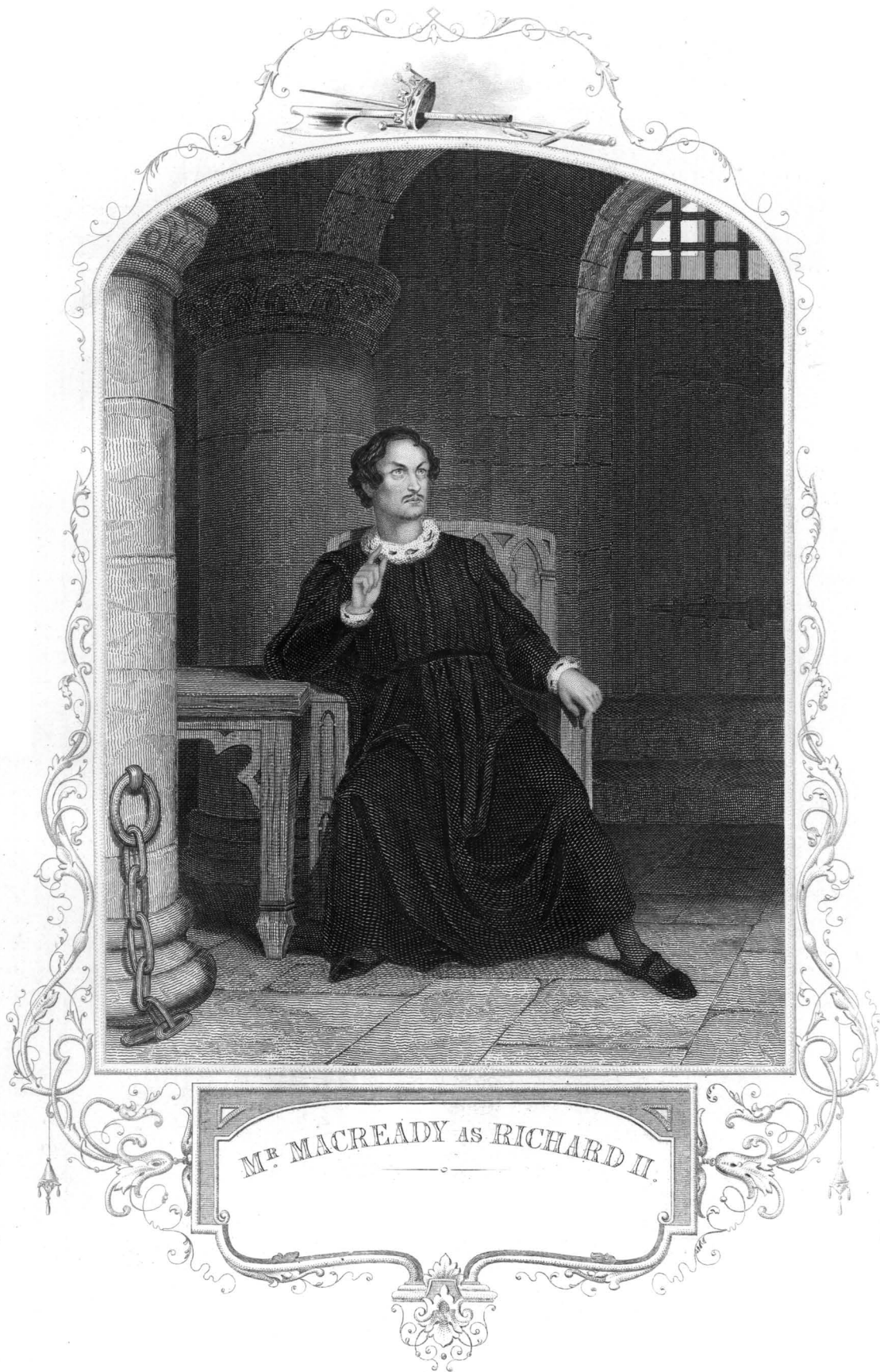
King Richard the Second.

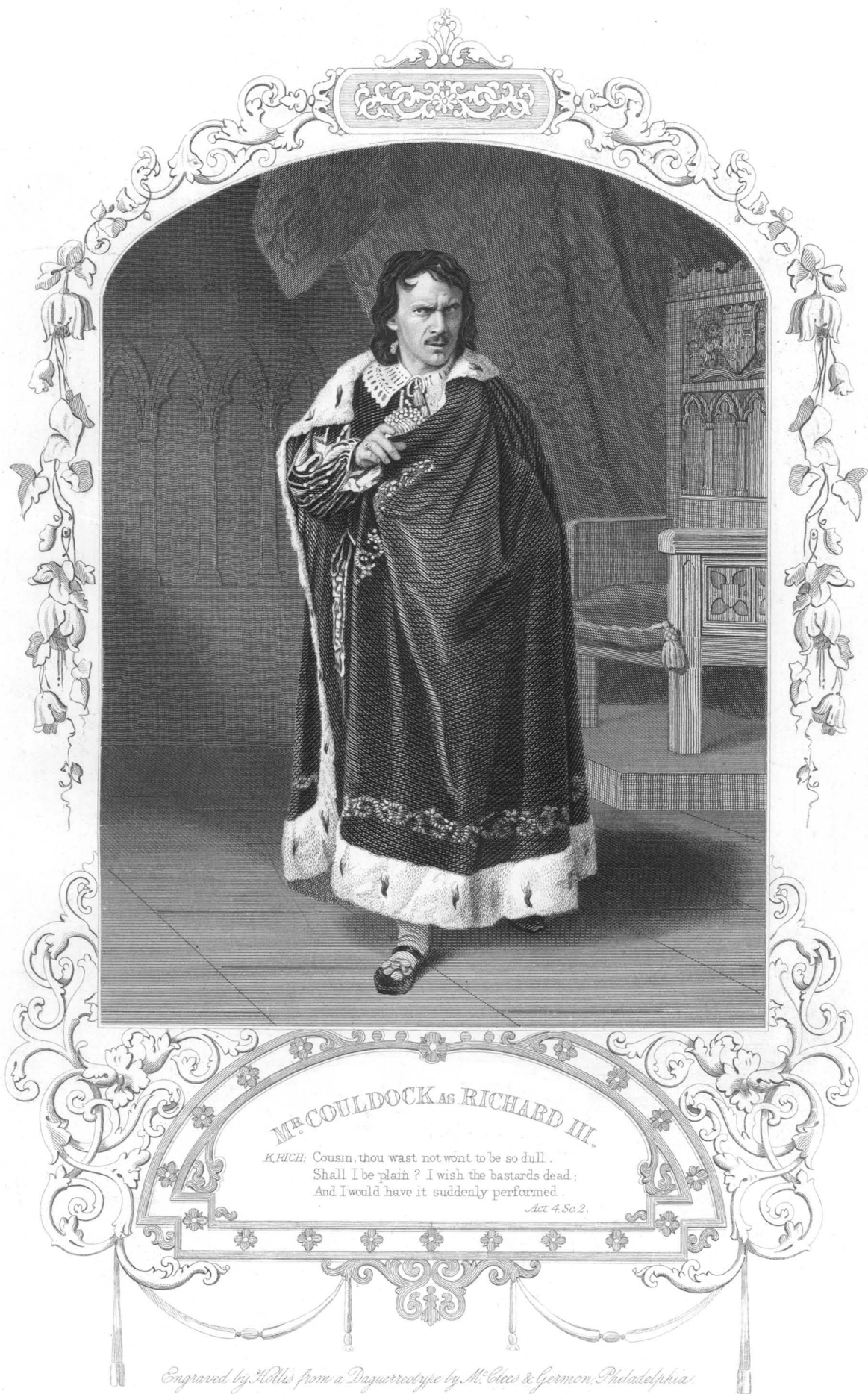
BETWEEN the death of John and the commencement of this play four kings had successively worn the crown of England, and a period of nearly two centuries had elapsed; but this and the seven plays which follow are one continuous history. A certain connexion is kept up between them, and they may be termed one perfect historical romance, of which the different plays constitute the books, and the acts and scenes the chapters. Disagreeing with Schlegel as to the invariable historical fidelity of these productions, and condemning the adulatory spirit and eager "hero-worship" which would call that history, which the poet only intended as romance, I still gladly avail myself of the happily expressed thought of the great German critic, and say, that this series of dramas "furnishes examples of the political course of the world, applicable to all times. *This mirror of kings should be the manual of young princes*; from it they may learn the intrinsic dignity of their hereditary vocation, but they will also learn from it the difficulties of their situation, the dangers of usurpation, the inevitable fall of tyranny, which buries itself under its attempts to obtain a firmer foundation; lastly, the ruinous consequences of the weaknesses, errors, and crimes of kings, for whole nations, and many subsequent generations."

These historic dramas must be regarded as lofty fictions, fiction teaching truth; great political parables, based on facts, but rearing their high and graceful pinnacles into the realms of imagination. But if they are pronounced to be strict literal history, then must we say that much of history is merely what Napoleon declared it to be—"a fiction agreed upon."

Richard ascended the throne in 1377, when but in his eleventh year; but notwithstanding his youth he was respected as the son of Edward the famous Black Prince, the darling of the people, and as the grandson of the powerful and popular monarch Edward the Third. Shakspeare in this drama passes over one-and-twenty turbulent years of Richard's reign, and confines himself to the incidents of the two last; commencing with the accusation by Bolingbroke of the Duke of Norfolk of treason. Richard committed a great error in banishing these noblemen; during his whole reign he had been oppressed by the power of his uncles and others of his great nobility. His policy should have been to let them quarrel and fight among themselves, and thus have rendered each a counterpoise to the power of the rest. To banish Hereford was both unjust and impolitic, but to seize his estates on the death of his father, John of Gaunt, was grossly dishonest. This arbitrary act tore the crown from Richard's temples, and paved the gloomy road to his murder-tainted cell at Pomfret. It brought the banished duke to England, ostensibly to obtain his paternal estates, but in reality to seize the crown: Encouraged by his own popularity in England, by Richard's absence, and the general discontent of both nobles and people, the crafty Bolingbroke returned and landed at Ravenspur with but sixty attendants; but he had chosen his time wisely, and was soon at the head of an army of sixty thousand men.

Weak, dissipated, and frivolous as Richard was, he gave, on some few occasions, evidences of great courage and promptitude of character. His conduct on the death of the rebel Tyler at Smithfield, when he disarmed the fury of the populace by riding boldly up to them, and exclaiming, "What are ye doing, my people? Tyler was a traitor—I am your king, and I will be your captain and guide," was courageous and decisive. Such heroism in a boy of fifteen, promised great talents in his maturity. The spirit of his father seemed to animate him on that occasion. Of a similar character was his conduct to his tyrannical uncle Gloucester, whose ambitious schemes had robbed the young king of all real power, and left him but the shadow of a sceptre, by placing the government in the hands of a commission of the nobles. In a full council, Richard, suddenly addressing his uncle, said, "How old do you think I am?" "Your highness," replied the duke, "is in your twenty-second year." "Then," continued





MR. COULDOCK AS RICHARD III.

K. RICH: Cousin, thou wast not wont to be so dull.
Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead;
And I would have it suddenly performed.

Act 4, Sc. 2.

Engraved by Hollis from a Daguerreotype by M. Clee & Gorman, Philadelphia.

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